Courtney Crumrin

Volume Six

The Final Spell

Ted Naifeh

This book belongs to

_____

Courtney Crumrin

Volume Six

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Volume Six

The Final Spell

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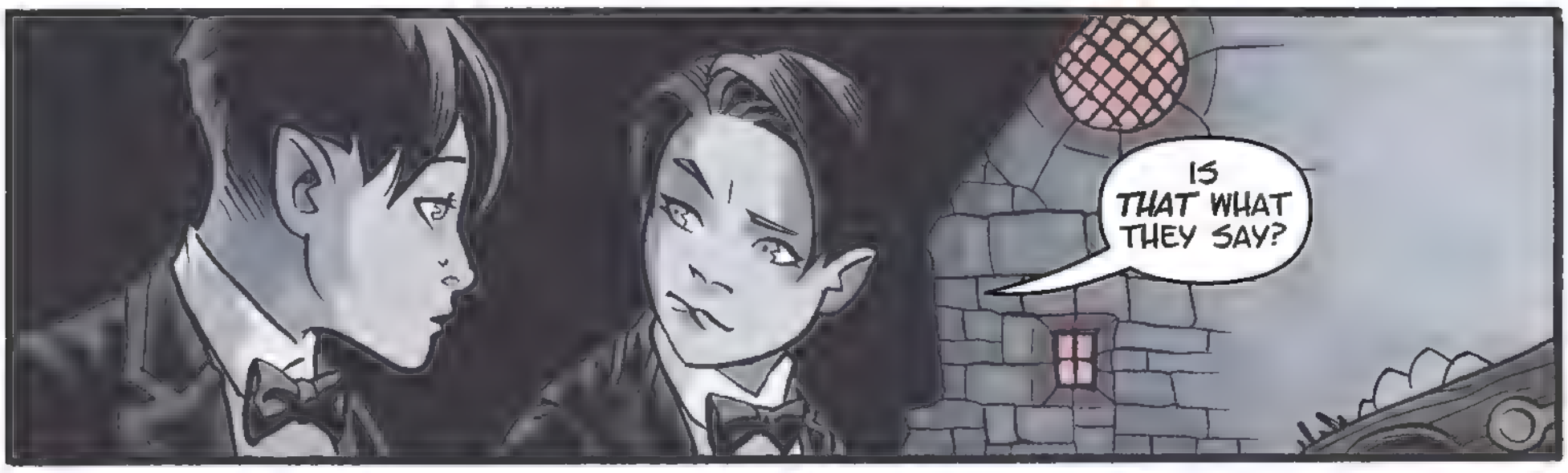
For Carol Garcia

Chapter One

WHAT IS IT?
THE ENTRANCE TO GOBLIN TOWN, YOU NINNY.

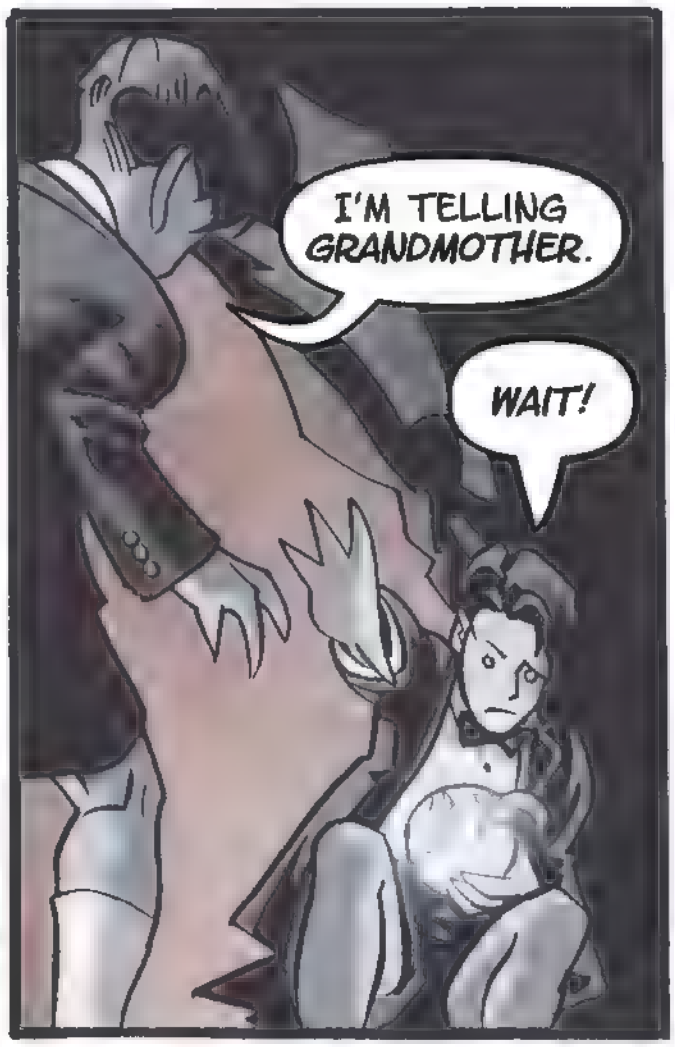
FANCY A CLOSER LOOK?
YOU WOULDN'T DARE.
TRY ME.

SOMETHING SMELLS LIKE HEAVEN!
I WONDER HOW IT TASTES.
THEY SAY YOU SHOULDN'T LET EVEN A CRUMB PASS YOUR LIPS.

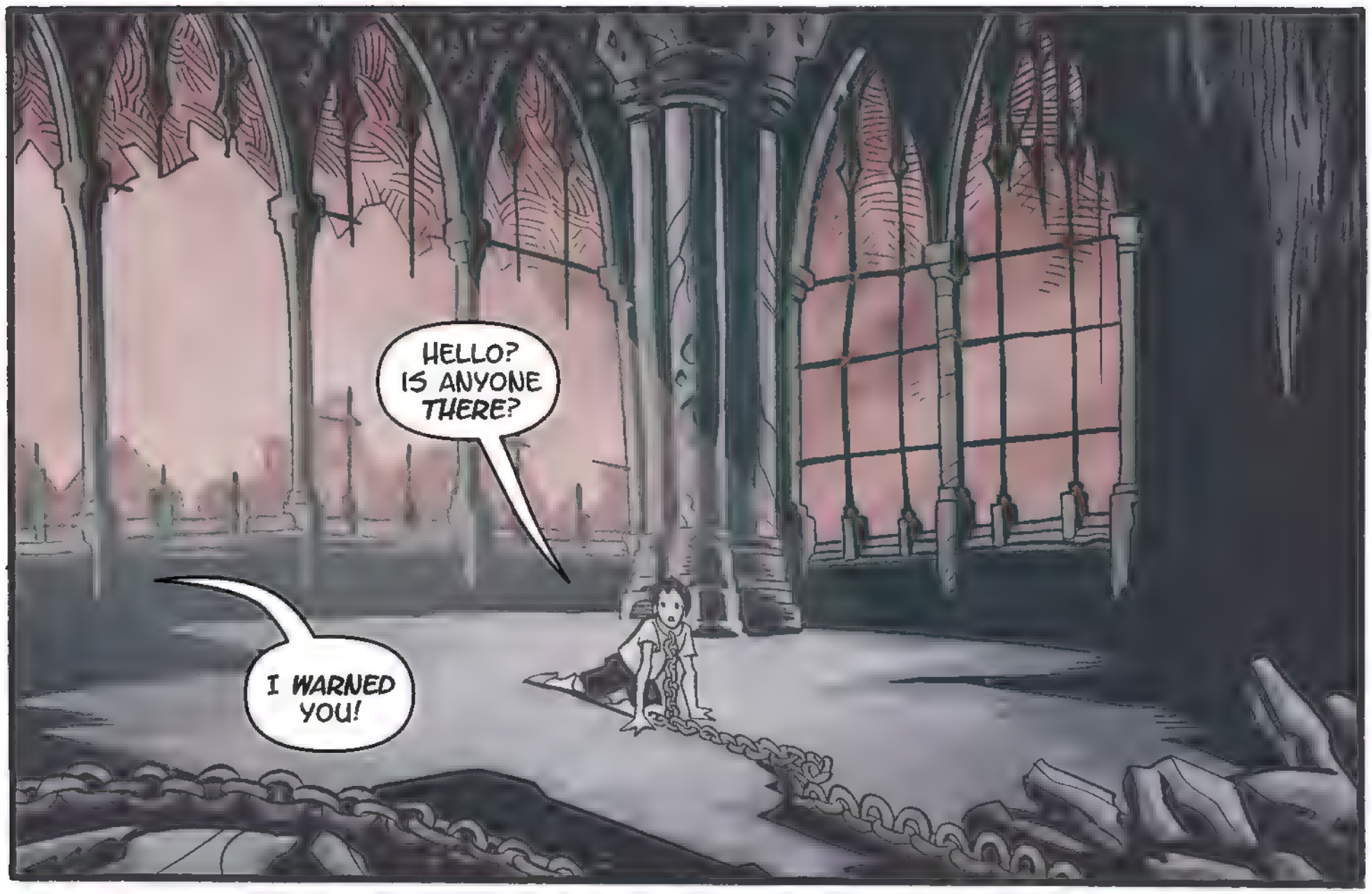

IS THAT WHAT THEY SAY?

DO YOU DARE ME?
NO. DON'T BE STUPID!

DON'T-


I'M TELLING GRANDMOTHER.
WAIT!

DON'T... LEAVE ME HERE...


HELLO? IS ANYONE THERE?
I WARNED YOU!

DON'T WORRY, I'LL GET YOU OUT!
BEHIND YOU-

TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE. IT HARDLY SEEMS SPORTING.

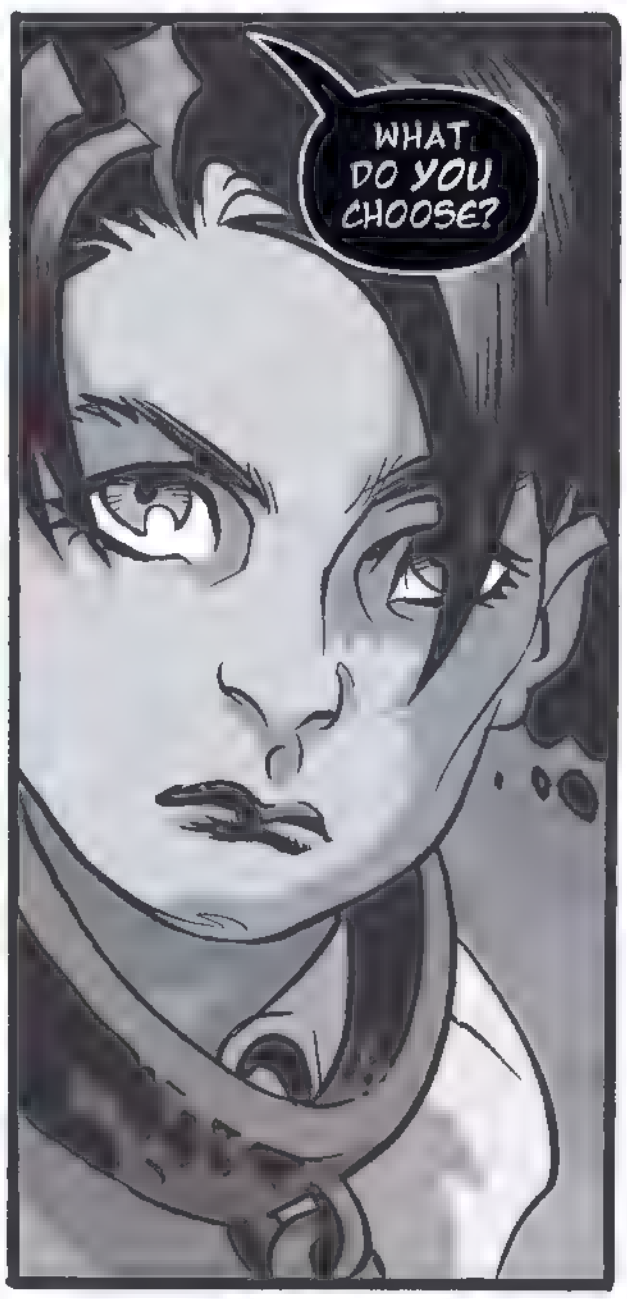
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO FETCH GRANDMOTHER.
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN WISER. BUT I'LL MAKE A BARGAIN WITH YOU.

I ONLY NEED ONE PET.

SO ONE OF YOU MAY GO FREE.
BUT YOU MUST CHOOSE WHICH.

PLEASE, LET MY BROTHER GO. I'LL STAY.

AND YOU, MORTAL?

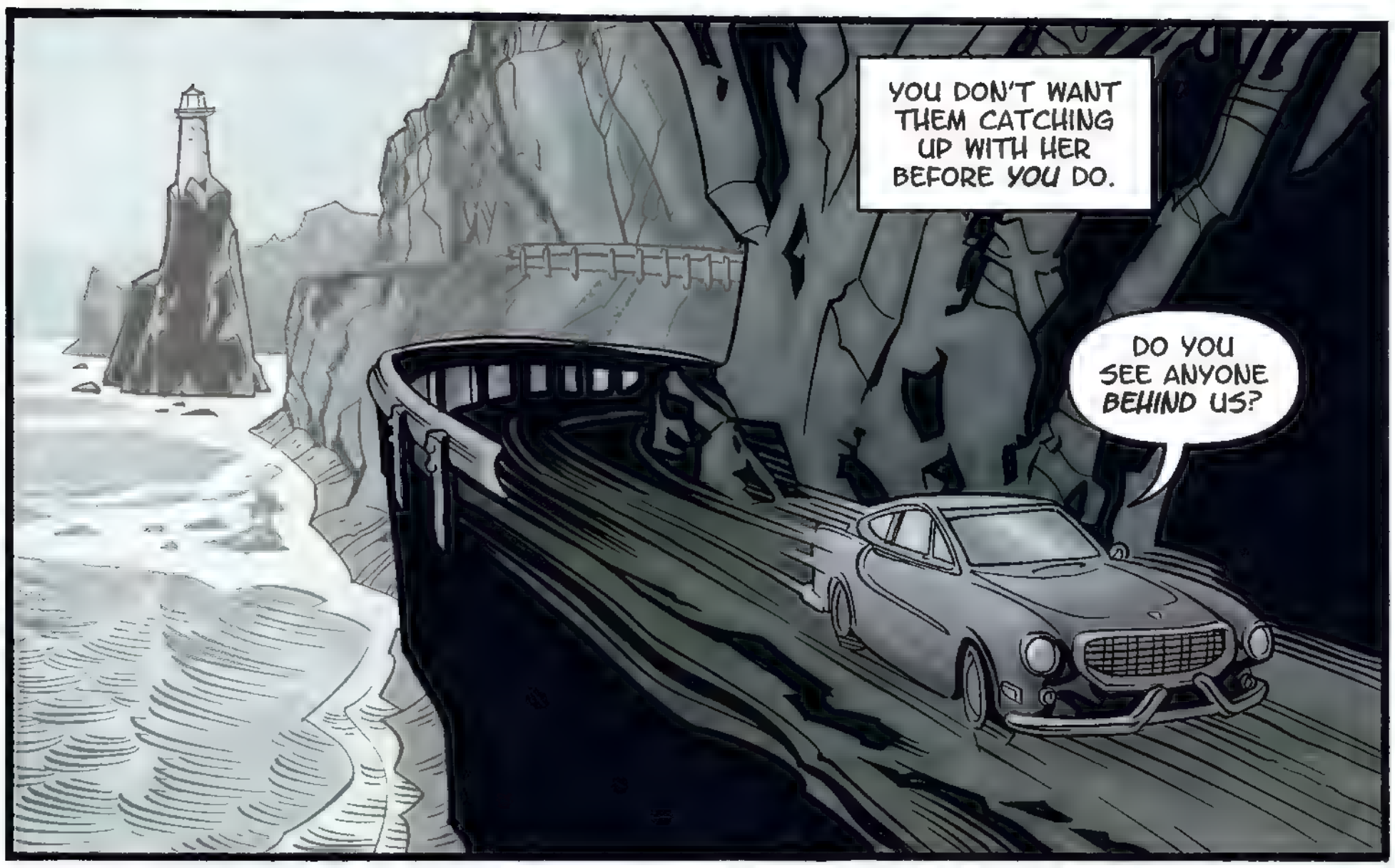

WHAT DO YOU CHOOSE?

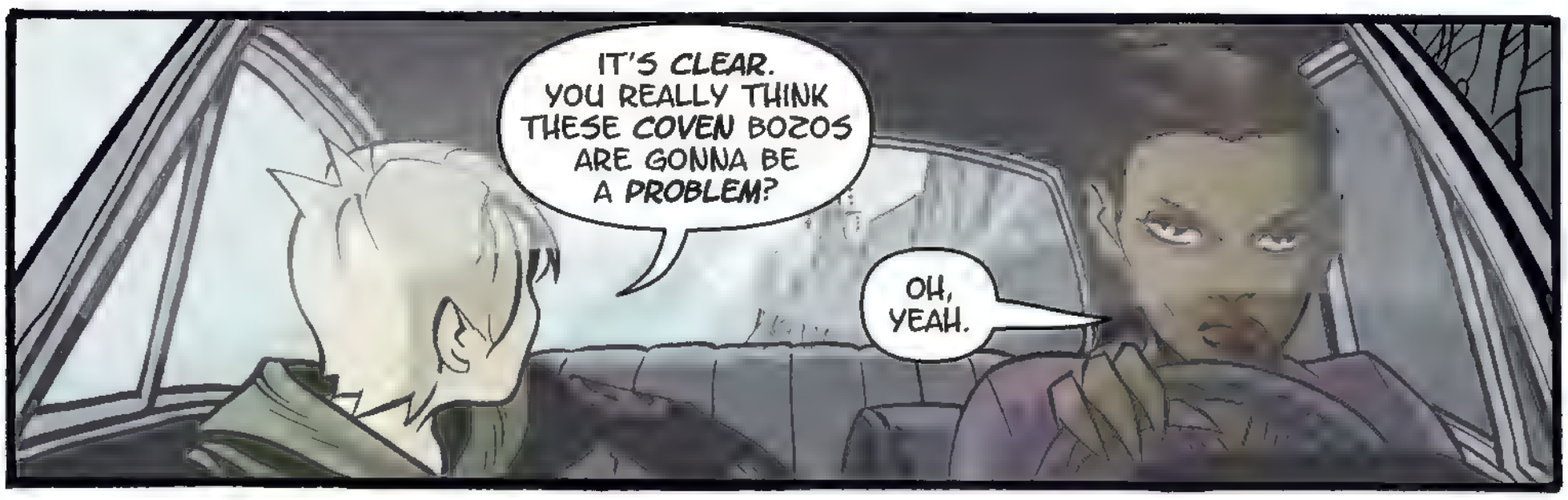
THAT WILL ONLY LAST YOU SEVEN DAYS.

WHEN YOU HAVE BROUGHT COURTNEY CRUMRIN BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF MYSTICS, YOU WILL RECEIVE AS MUCH AS YOU DESIRE.
FOR A FAIR TRIAL?

I KEEP MY WORD, ALOYSIUS, EVEN IF YOU DON'T.
BUT DECIDE QUICKLY.

THE MARSHALS HAVE ALREADY BEEN DISPATCHED.


YOU DON'T WANT THEM CATCHING UP WITH HER BEFORE YOU DO.
DO YOU SEE ANYONE BEHIND US?

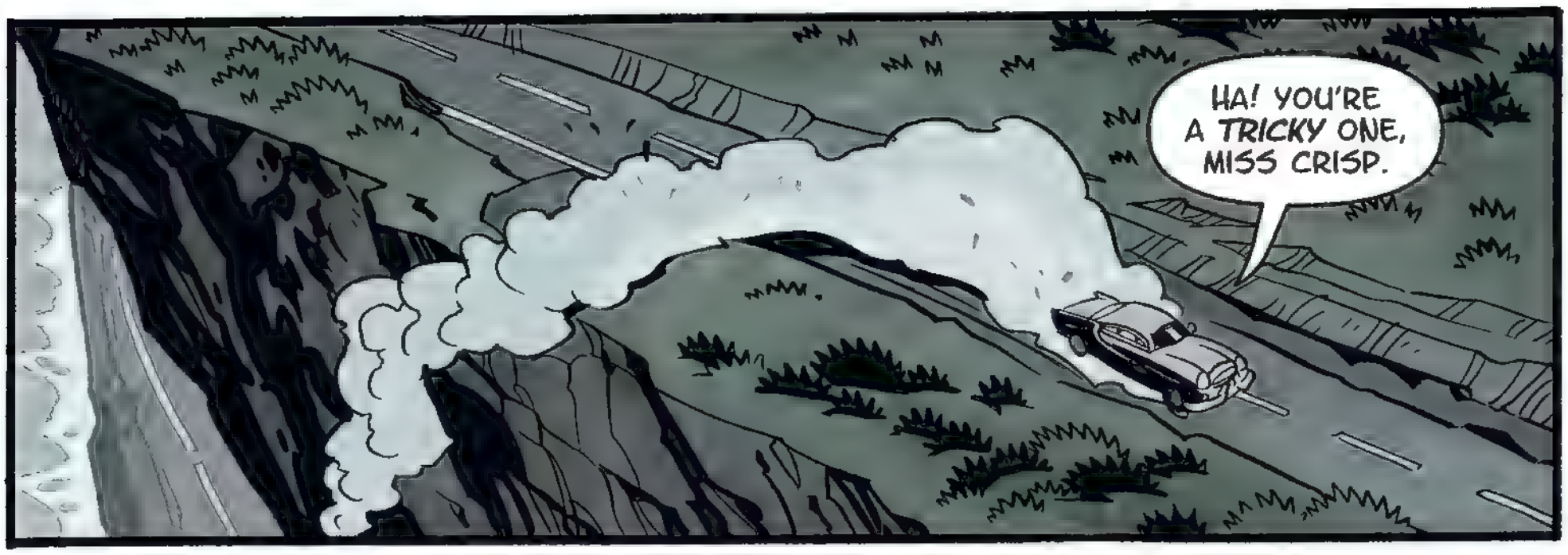

IT'S CLEAR. YOU REALLY THINK THESE COVEN BOZOS ARE GONNA BE A PROBLEM?
OH, YEAH.

SURRENDER!

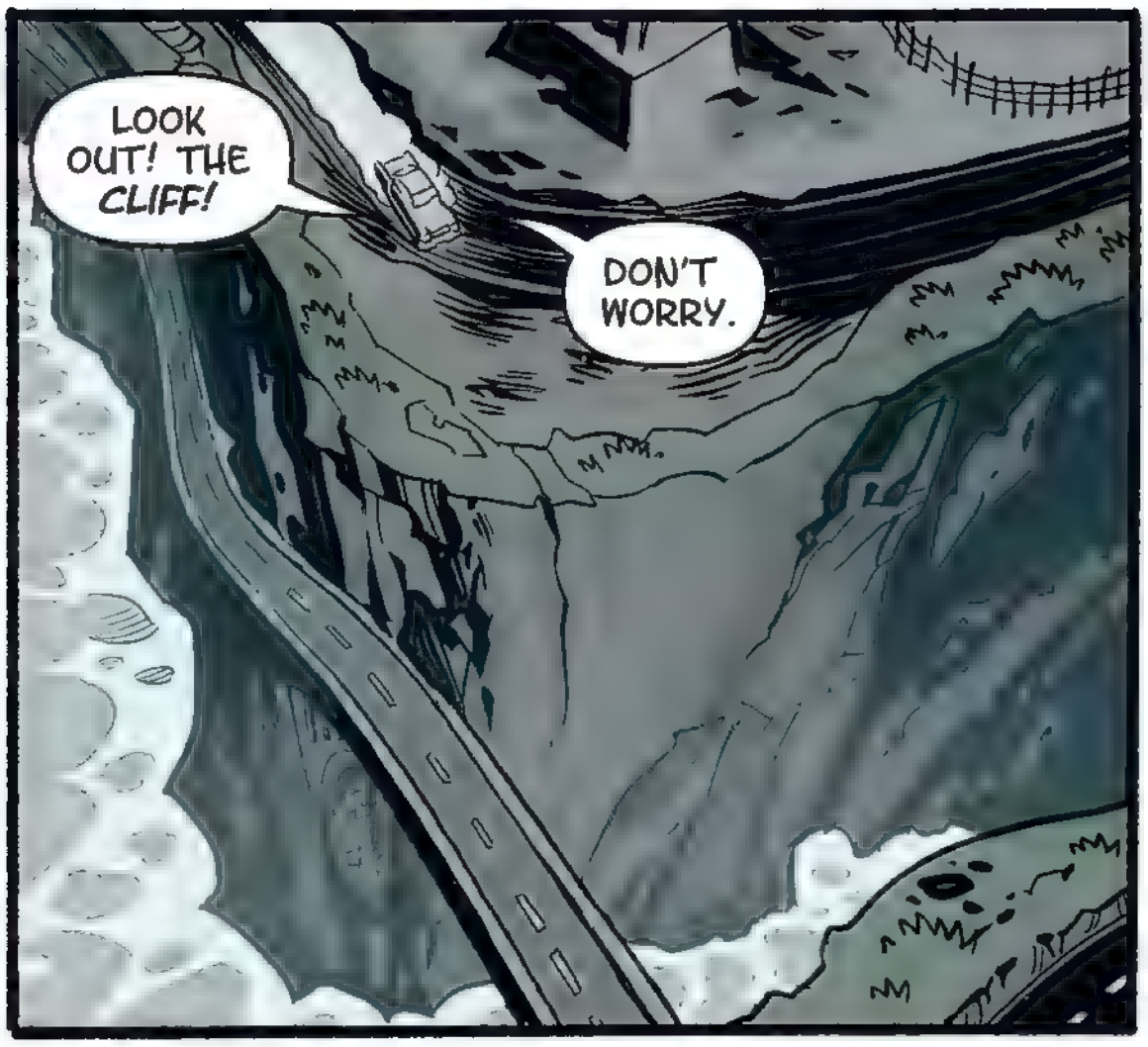
HE'S CASTING AN *ENSNAREMENT* SPELL! WE'RE *TRAPPED!*

NOT YET.

WHAT THE-


HA! YOU'RE A TRICKY ONE, MISS CRISP.

SO ARE THEY.
HANG ON!


LOOK OUT! THE CLIFF!
DON'T WORRY.

THEY'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN FLY.

OW!

I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO *BUCKLE UP!*

COURTNEY, LISTEN CAREFULLY!
WE CAN'T LET THEM CATCH US.
DO YOU KNOW ANY MAGIC THAT MIGHT STOP THEM?
I JUST KNOW THE HAND OF FIRE!
BUT UNCLE A SAID I CAN'T USE IT ON PEOPLE, OR I'LL GET INTO TROUBLE.
COURTNEY!
WE'RE IN REALLY BIG TROUBLE!
AAAAAGH!

LOOK OUT!

KEEP FOLLOWING. I'LL CUT THEM OFF.

THEY'RE GOING TO SURROUND US!

I DON'T THINK SO.

OPEN.

WHAT-?

FAERIE ROAD.
I KEEP IT HANDY FOR EMERGENCIES.

HOW!?!

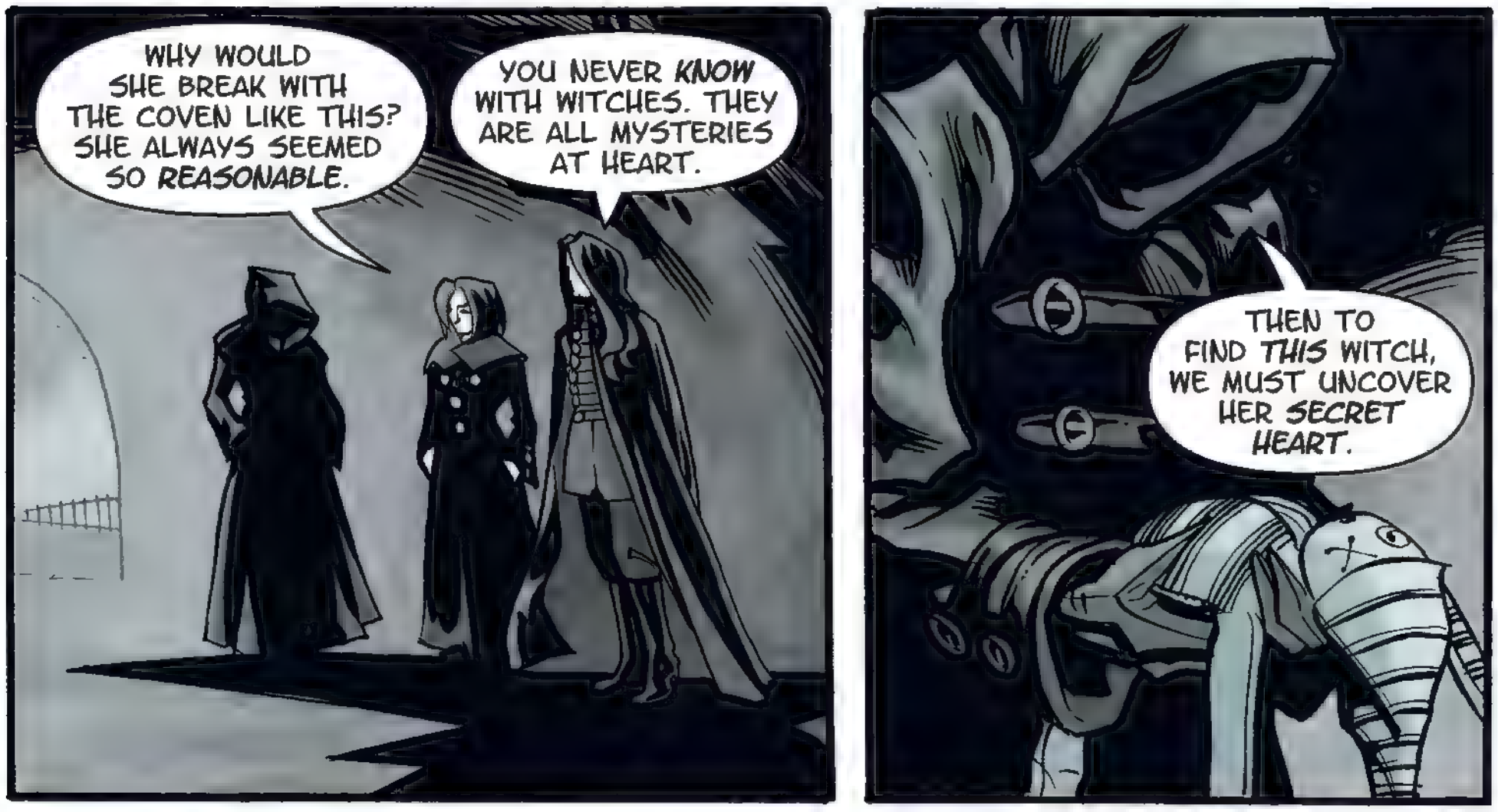
HOW DID SHE DO THAT?

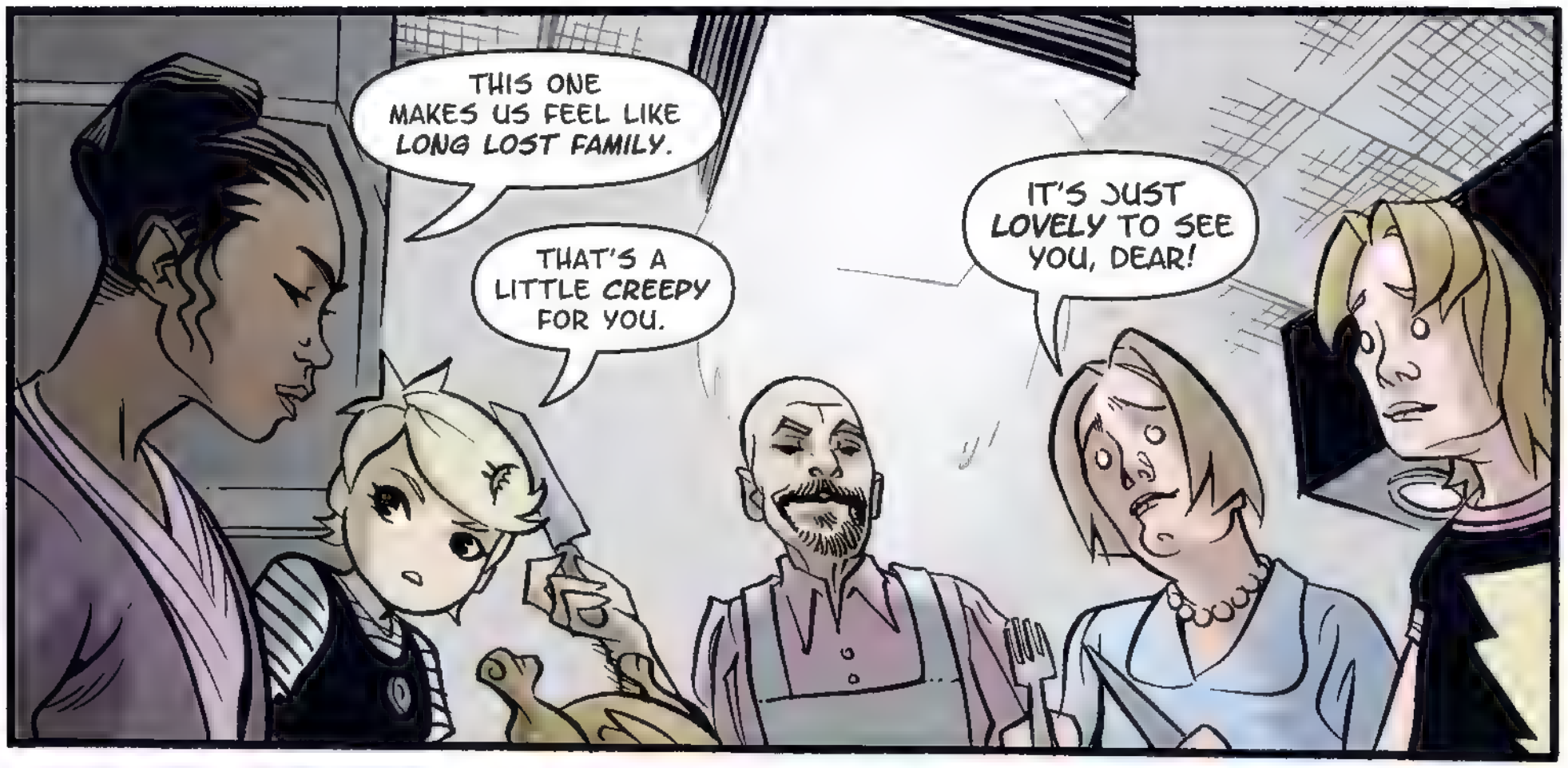
SHE'S A SMART ONE, FATHER.

SURELY YOU NOTICED WHEN SHE WAS ON THE COUNCIL.

NO.

FIGURES.

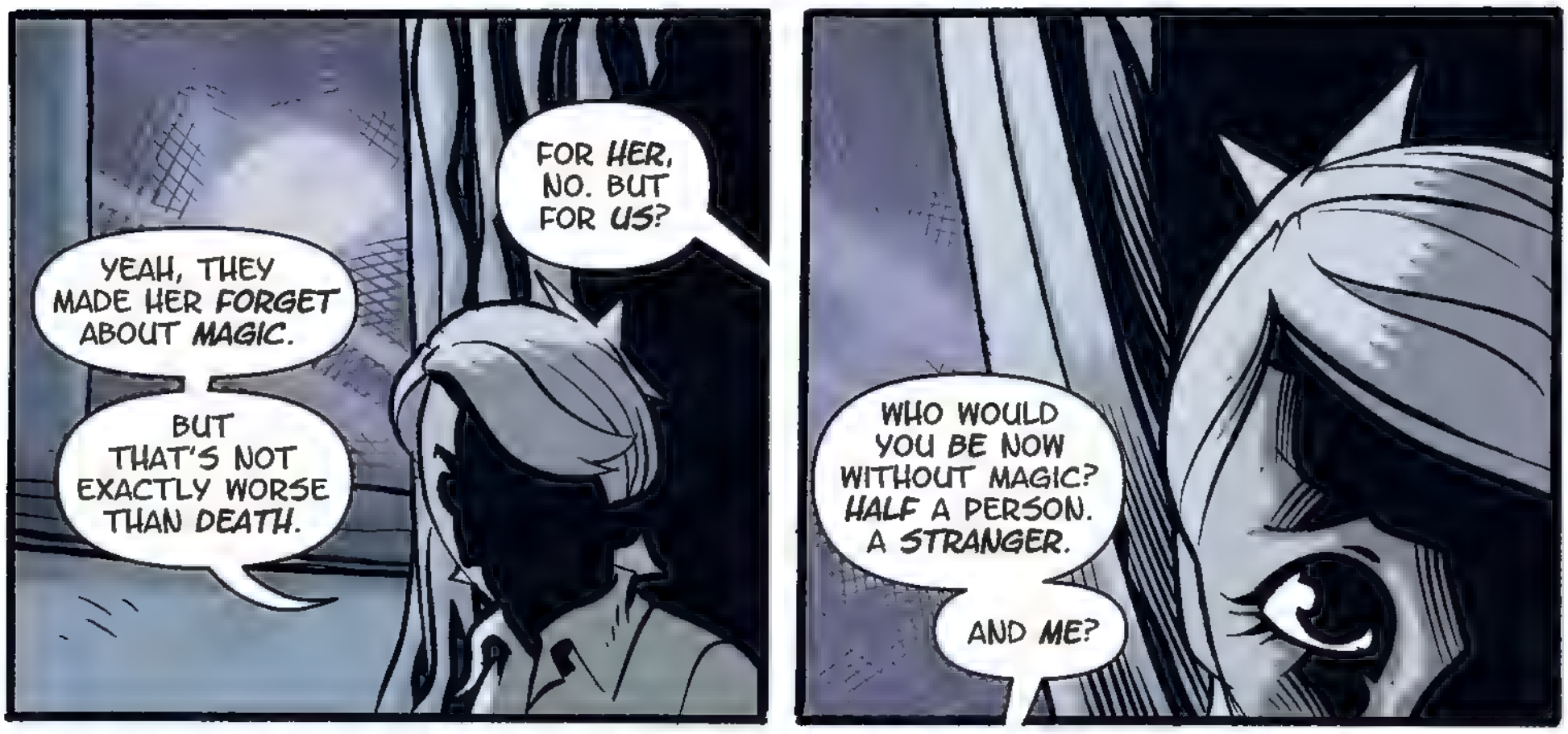

WHY WOULD SHE BREAK WITH THE COVEN LIKE THIS? SHE ALWAYS SEEMED SO REASONABLE.
YOU NEVER KNOW WITH WITCHES. THEY ARE ALL MYSTERIES AT HEART.
THEN TO FIND THIS WITCH, WE MUST UNCOVER HER SECRET HEART.
GOODNESS, WHAT A SURPRISE!
COME IN! WE WERE JUST SITTING DOWN TO DINNER.
HOPE YOU'RE HUNGRY, GALS.
HOW DO YOU KNOW THESE PEOPLE?
I DON'T.
BUT I DO KNOW GLAMOUR SPELLS.


THIS ONE MAKES US FEEL LIKE LONG LOST FAMILY.
THAT'S A LITTLE CREEPY FOR YOU.
IT'S JUST LOVELY TO SEE YOU, DEAR!

GET SOME SLEEP. WE HAVE A LONG ROAD AHEAD.
WHAT ARE WE RUNNING FROM, REALLY? HOW BAD IS IT?

BAD, KIDDO.
WILL THEY KILL US?

WORSE.
REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FRIEND HOLLY?


FOR HER, NO. BUT FOR US?
YEAH, THEY MADE HER FORGET ABOUT MAGIC.
BUT THAT'S NOT EXACTLY WORSE THAN DEATH.
WHO WOULD YOU BE NOW WITHOUT MAGIC? HALF A PERSON. A STRANGER.
AND ME?
I DISCOVERED MAGIC WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE. SINCE THEN, IT'S BECOME MY WHOLE LIFE.
TAKE IT AWAY, AND WHAT WOULD BE LEFT?
I'D BE NOTHING BUT A HOLLOW SHELL.
A GHOST.
YOU RISKED THAT FOR ME? WHY?
IT WASN'T JUST FOR YOU.
I PROMISED ALOYSIUS I'D LOOK AFTER YOU. I OWED HIM.

TOGETHER.

AH!
WHAT'S GOING ON!?! WHO'RE YOU?
THAT'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW.
SHE TRICKED US AGAIN. STILL SURPRISED?
THAT'S A 30-FOOT DROP!
IT'S A LIGHT-FOOT ENCHANTMENT. TRY IT.
MAN, I'D BE DOING THIS ALL DAY IF I'D KNOWN ABOUT IT.
C'MON, THE CAR IS THIS WAY.

I ALWAYS LOVED THIS CAR, YOU KNOW THAT. RECOGNIZED IT INSTANTLY.
VELVET
UNDERGROUND
RUN, COURTNEY.
WAIT, LISTEN! I'M YOUR FRIEND, CALPURNIA. JUST TELL ME WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT.
OKAY. YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW? TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.
WHAT IS IT-?

GAAAAAHH!
I'M REALLY SORRY, ISOBEL, BUT I DON'T HAVE TIME TO SPELL IT OUT FOR YOU.
I JUST HOPE YOU'RE SMART ENOUGH TO PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER.

METRO
HELVATIA ST.
COURTNEY! GET IN THE CAR!

WHOA!

I KNOW YOU'RE *DOWN* THERE, MISS CRUMRIN. IF YOU WANT TO SEE MISS CRISP *ALIVE* AGAIN...

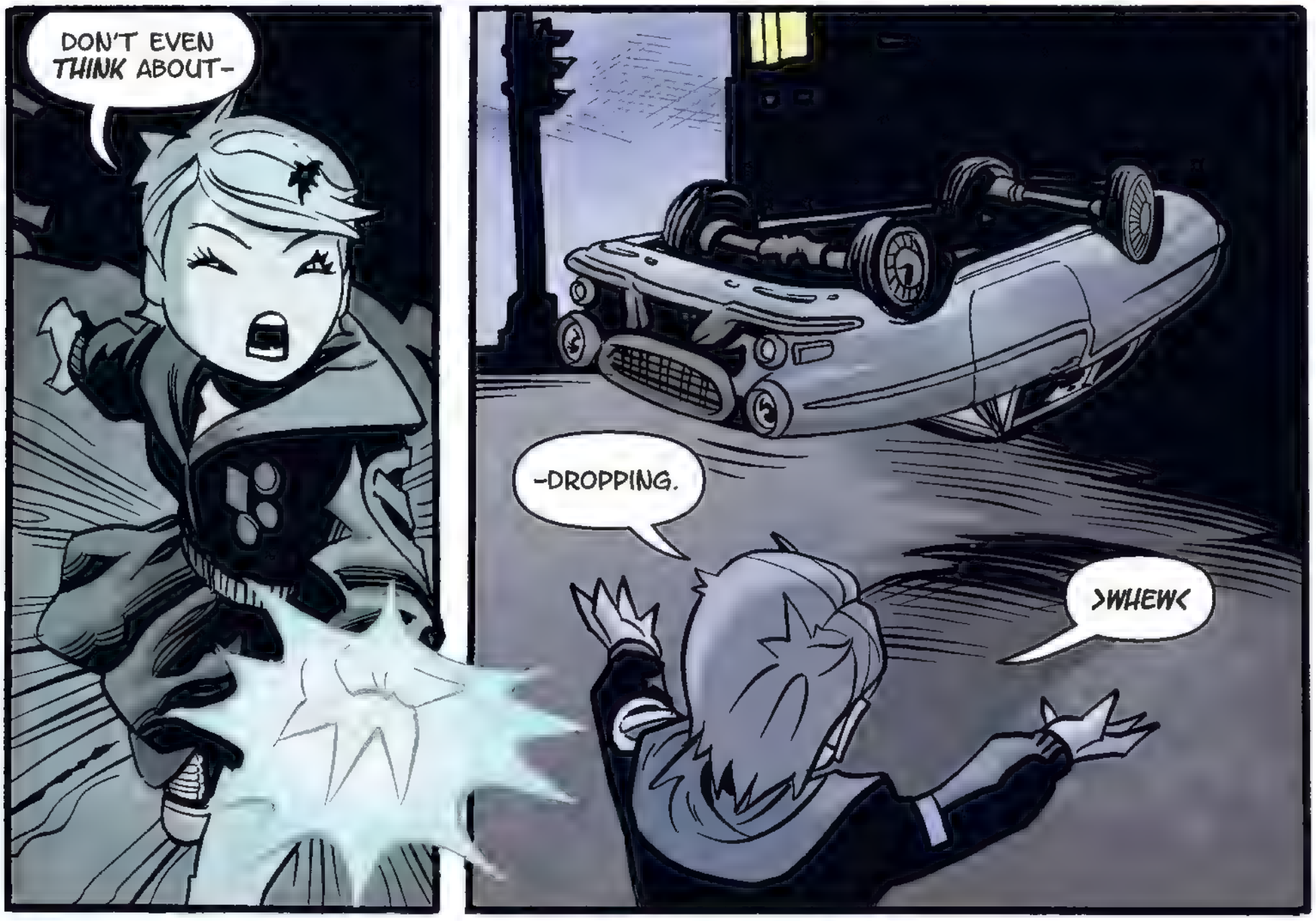
METRO

METRO

METRO

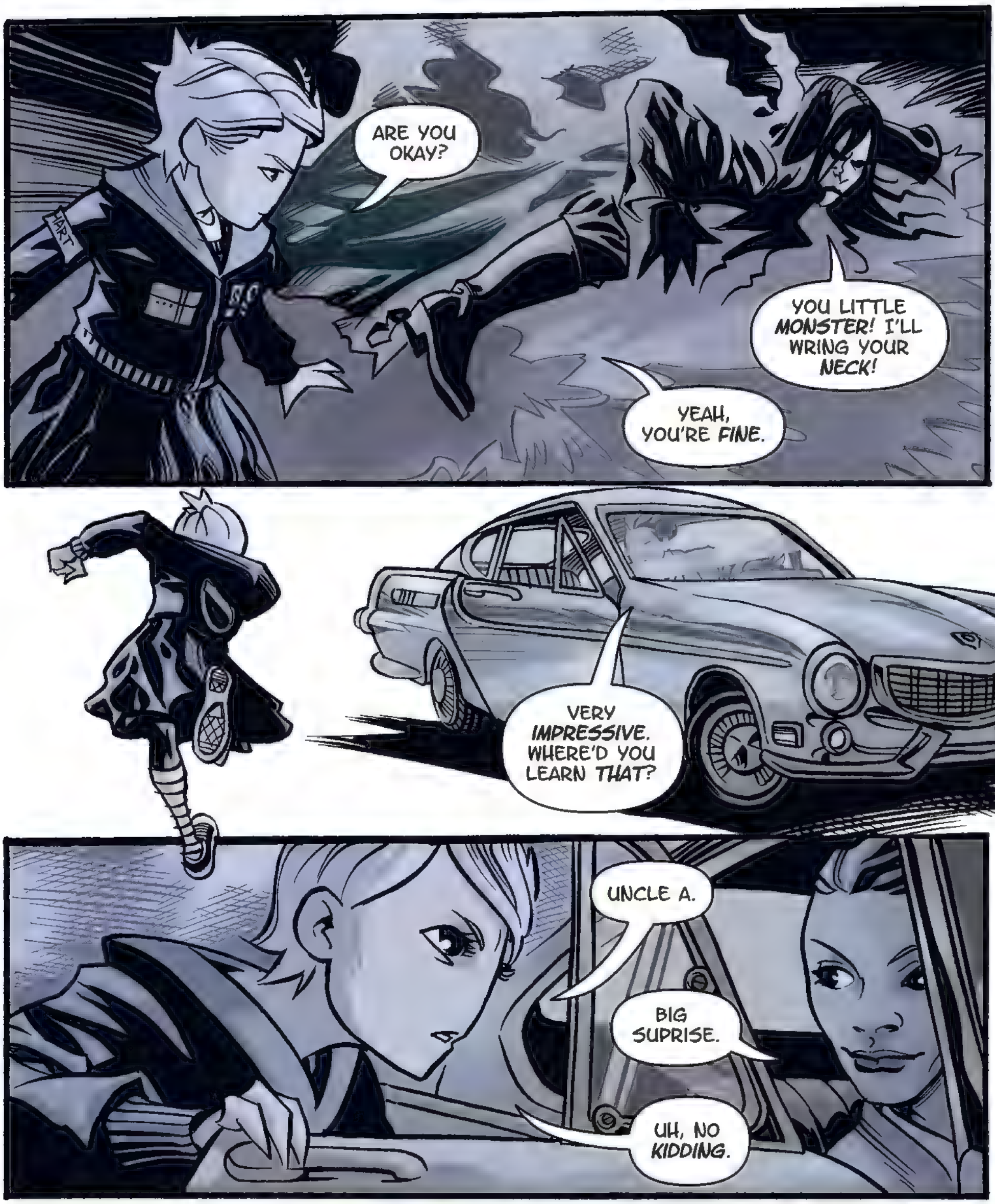
YOU WILL *SURRENDER* YOURSELF TO ME *IMMEDIATELY.*

METRO
YOU HAVE TILL THE COUNT OF-
AAAARGH!!!


DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT-
-DROPPING.
>WHEW<

OW!

SHOULDA BUCKLED UP.


ARE YOU OKAY?
YOU LITTLE MONSTER! I'LL WRING YOUR NECK!
YEAH, YOU'RE FINE.
VERY IMPRESSIVE. WHERE'D YOU LEARN THAT?
UNCLE A.
BIG SUPRISE.
UH, NO KIDDING.
OH. BUGGER.
YUP.

HELLO, CALPURNIA.

COURTNEY.

IT'S TIME TO COME *HOME*.

Chapter Two

ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A LITTLE GIRL NAMED COURTNEY CRUMRIN...

COURTNEY...

IT'S TIME TO COME *HOME*.

...WHOSE WORLD REVOLVED AROUND HER GREAT UNCLE ALOYSIUS.

HE TAUGHT HER MAGIC, AND OPENED UP A PLACE IN HIS HEART FOR HER.

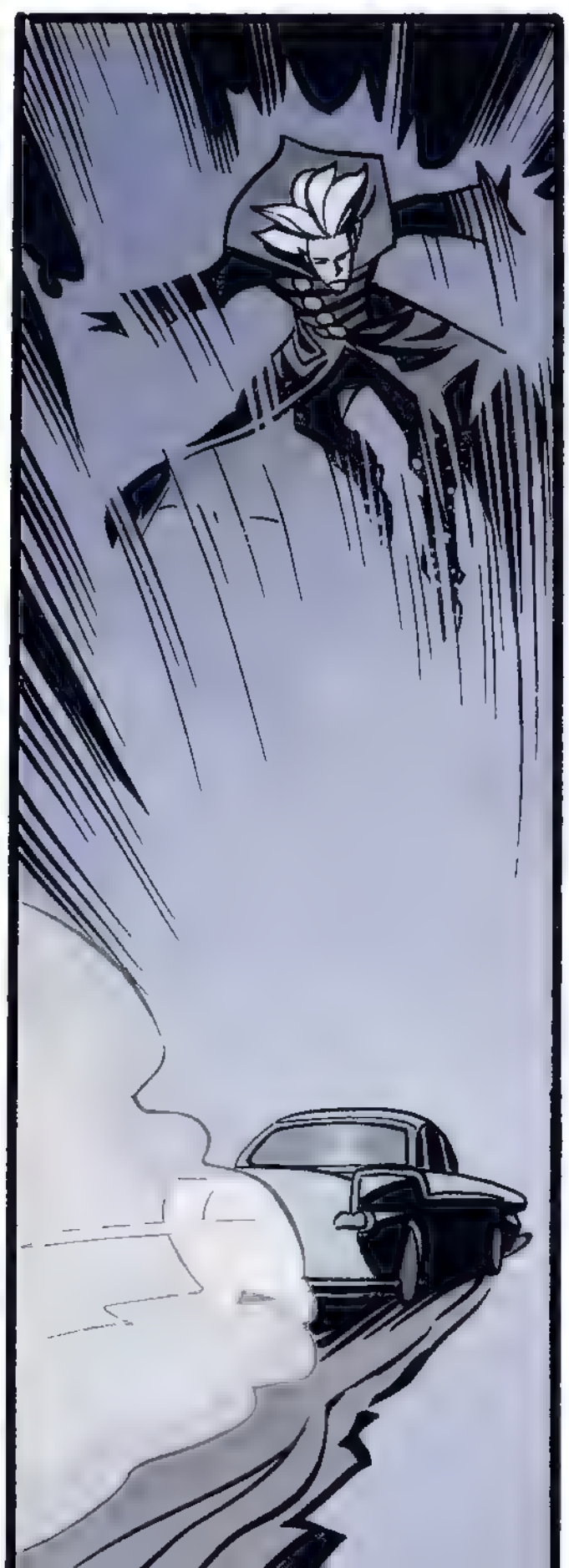
WHAT ABOUT THE *COVEN*?

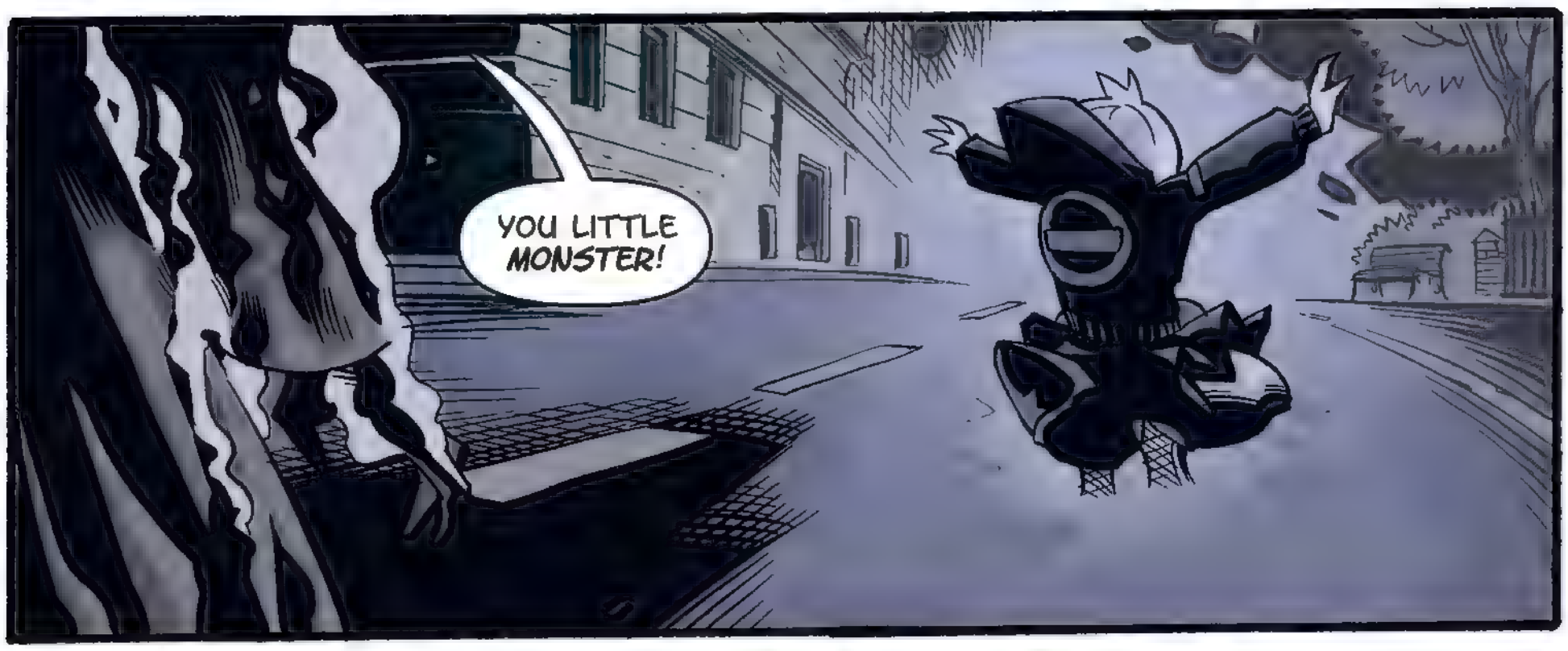
HE BECAME HER BEST FRIEND.
I WILL PROTECT YOU.
OH, REALLY?

HOW'D THAT WORK OUT FOR YOUR CHANGELING FRIEND, SKARROW?

UNTIL THE MOMENT SHE REALISED HE WAS HER WORST ENEMY.

SKREEEEEEE



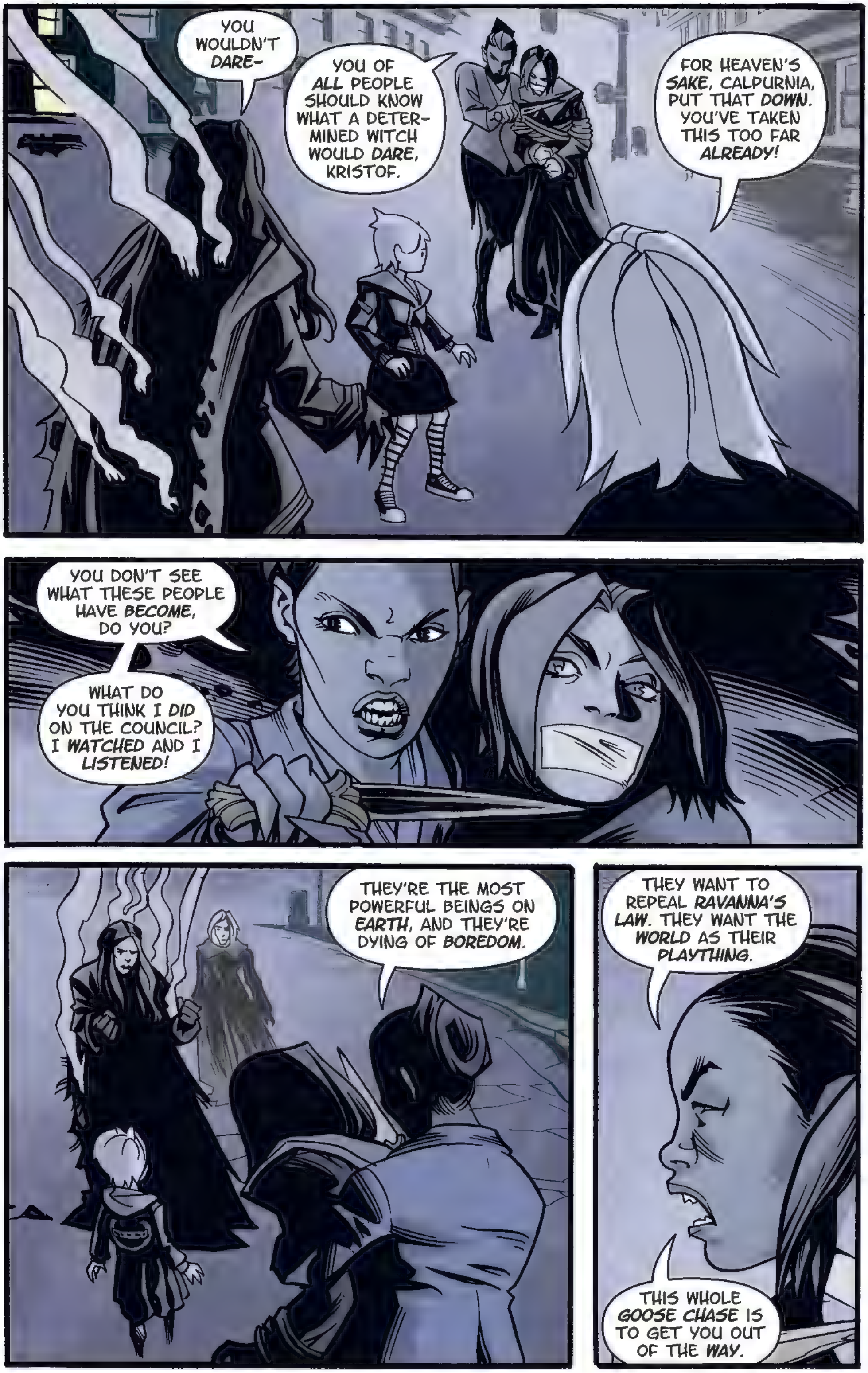

YOU LITTLE MONSTER!

I'LL RING YOUR SKINNY-

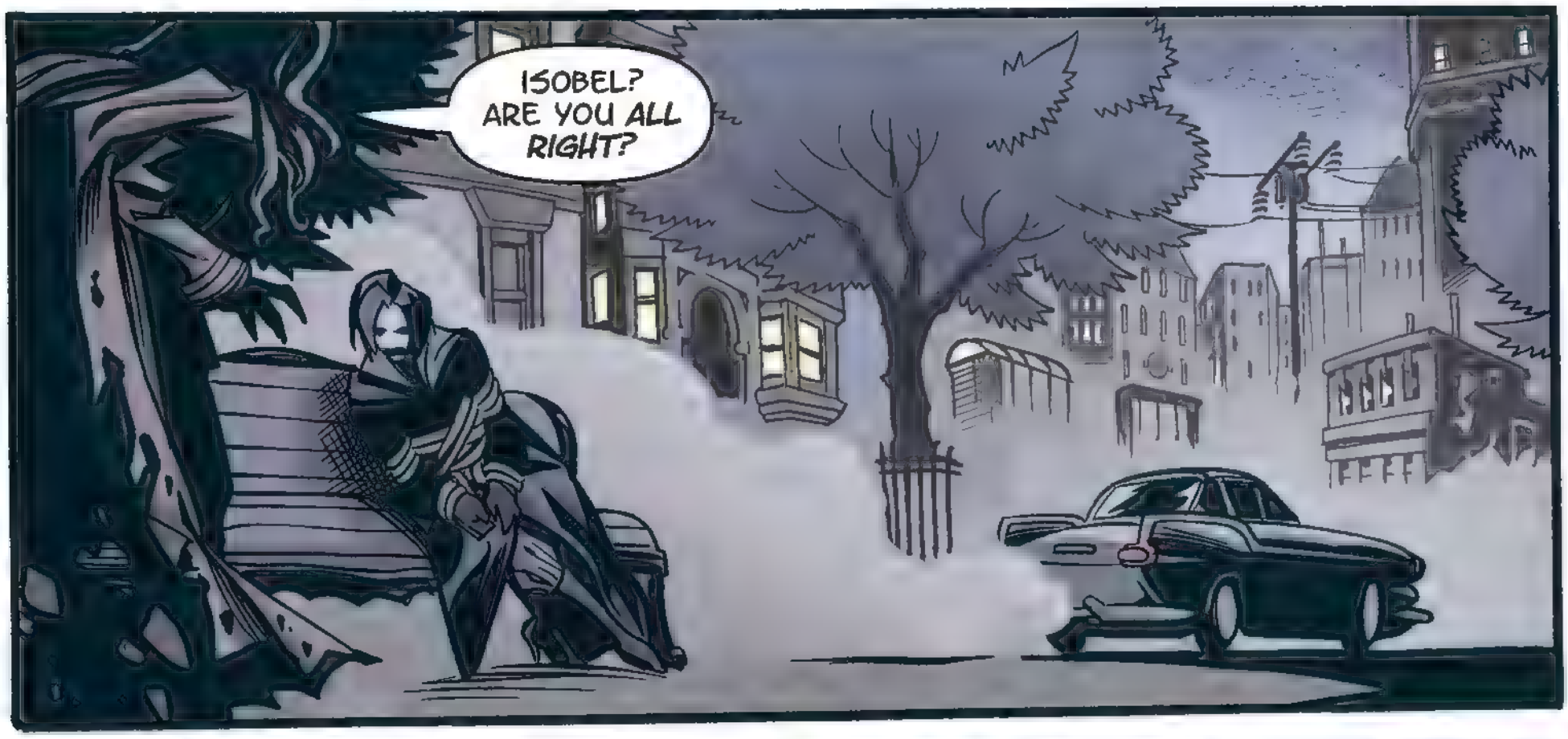
TRIANNE!

DON'T FORGET, MY FRIEND...

MARSHAL OR NOT, IF YOU HARM MY NIECE, YOU WON'T LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO REGRET IT.
BACK AWAY, BOTH OF YOU.


YOU WOULDN'T DARE-
YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW WHAT A DETERMINED WITCH WOULD DARE, KRISTOF.
FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, CALPURNIA, PUT THAT DOWN. YOU'VE TAKEN THIS TOO FAR ALREADY!
YOU DON'T SEE WHAT THESE PEOPLE HAVE BECOME, DO YOU?
WHAT DO YOU THINK I DID ON THE COUNCIL? I WATCHED AND I LISTENED!
THEY'RE THE MOST POWERFUL BEINGS ON EARTH, AND THEY'RE DYING OF BOREDOM.
THEY WANT TO REPEAL RAVANNA'S LAW. THEY WANT THE WORLD AS THEIR PLAYTHING.
THIS WHOLE GOOSE CHASE IS TO GET YOU OUT OF THE WAY.

YOU GIVE WOODRUE TOO MUCH CREDIT FOR BRAINS...
...AND NOT ENOUGH FOR ETHICS.
BESIDES, COURTNEY SHOULDN'T SPEND THE REST OF HER LIFE RUNNING.
SHE JUST NEEDS TO TELL HER SIDE OF THE STORY.
TO WHO? HIM?
IF YOU HURT HER, SO HELP ME-
CALM YOURSELF, MAN. WE'VE LOST THIS ROUND.


ISOBEL? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

THANK GOODNESS-
IS IT TRUE, FATHER? DO YOU INTEND TO REPEAL RAVANNA'S LAW?
WHATEVER THAT WOMAN TOLD YOU-

STOP
DON'T PLAY GAMES WITH ME. I'M NOT A CHILD.
YOU WATCH YOUR TONE, YOUNG LADY.

BUT SINCE YOU ASK...
THE COUNCIL HAS BEEN DISCUSSING A REASSESSMENT OF THE POLICY.

WE HAVE A DUTY TO USE MAGIC FOR THE BETTERMENT OF MANKIND.
AND WE CAN HARDLY DO THAT FROM OUR COMFORTABLE LITTLE BOROUGH.

I DON'T *UNDERSTAND?* WHY IS HE *DOING* THIS?

I THOUGHT HE *LOVED* ME.

HE *DOES*, IN HIS WAY.

HE LOVED MY *MOTHER*, YOU KNOW. *ALICE CRISP.*

BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP HIM FROM *USING* HER IN HIS LITTLE *PLOTS* AND THEN WIPING HER *MEMORY* AWAY.

HE ONLY TOLD ME THE STORY AFTER HER *FUNERAL*. BUT SHE ALWAYS KNEW THERE WAS A PIECE *MISSING* FROM HER LIFE.

HE USED POOR *HERMIA HARKEN* THE SAME *WAY*, AND THEN NEVER SPOKE TO HER *AGAIN*.

THEN THERE WAS HIS *BROTHER*, *WILBERFORCE*.

WHAT?

YOU DIDN'T KNOW? WELL, HOW COULD YOU? IT'S NOT LIKE HE WOULD HAVE SAID ANYTHING.
H. HART
THEY WERE TWINS. THEY WENT DOWN INTO THE GOBLIN WORLD ONE DAY, AND ONLY ALOYSIUS CAME BACK.
HE CLAIMED THAT WILBERFORCE WANTED TO STAY, BUT ONLY ALOYSIUS KNOWS WHAT REALLY HAPPENED DOWN THERE.
I CARE ABOUT HIM, AND I ALWAYS WILL. BUT HE HAS A WAY OF BETRAYING ANYONE WHO GETS TOO CLOSE.

WHERE ARE WE?

THE SAFEST PLACE I KNOW.

YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?

MRS. WRATHUM, IT'S ME!

CALPURNIA.

IT'S MS. *OLDS*, YOUNGSTER. BEEN DIVORCED *30 YEARS*. LEMME *GUESS*.

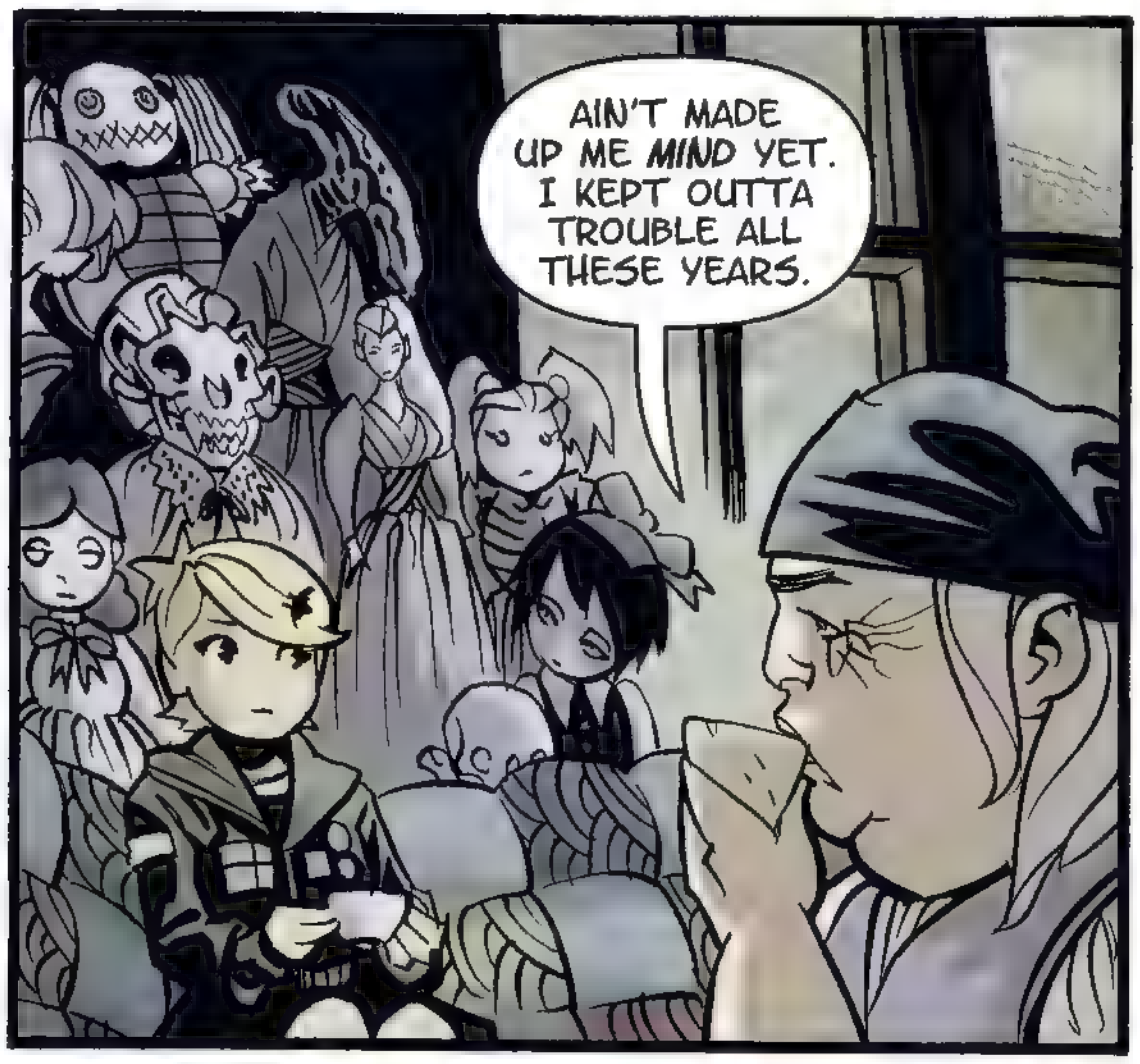
OL' WOODRUE *DIED* AND YOU'RE HERE TO GIMME MY *INHERITANCE*.

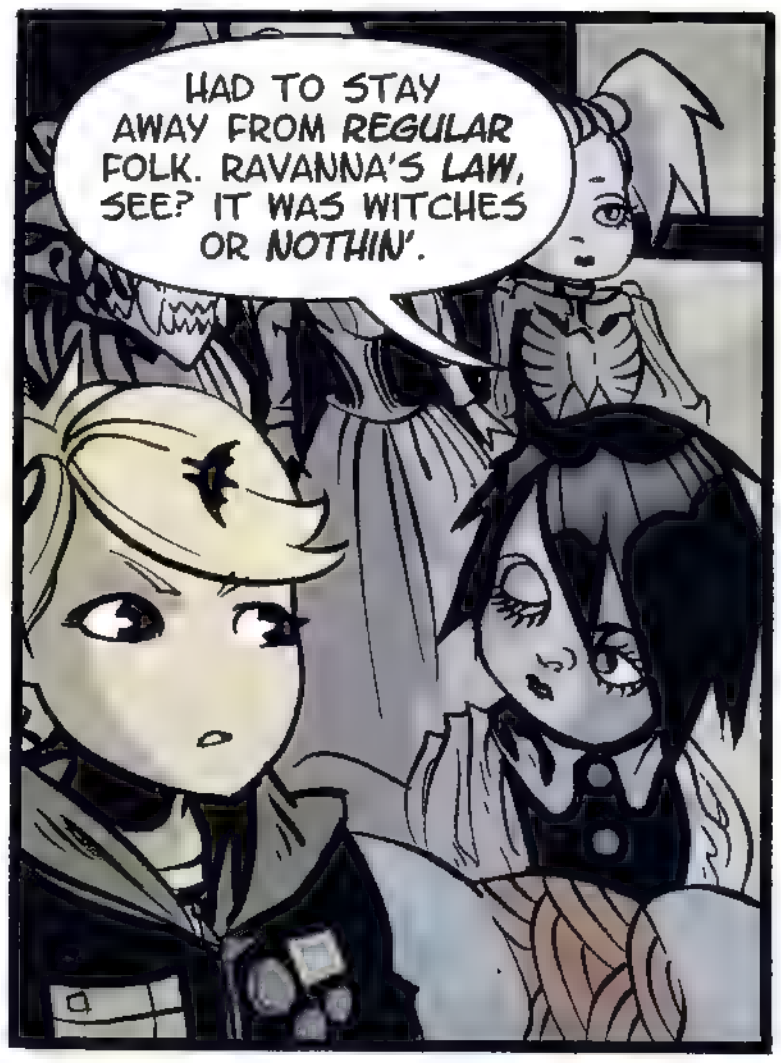
AFRAID *NOT*.

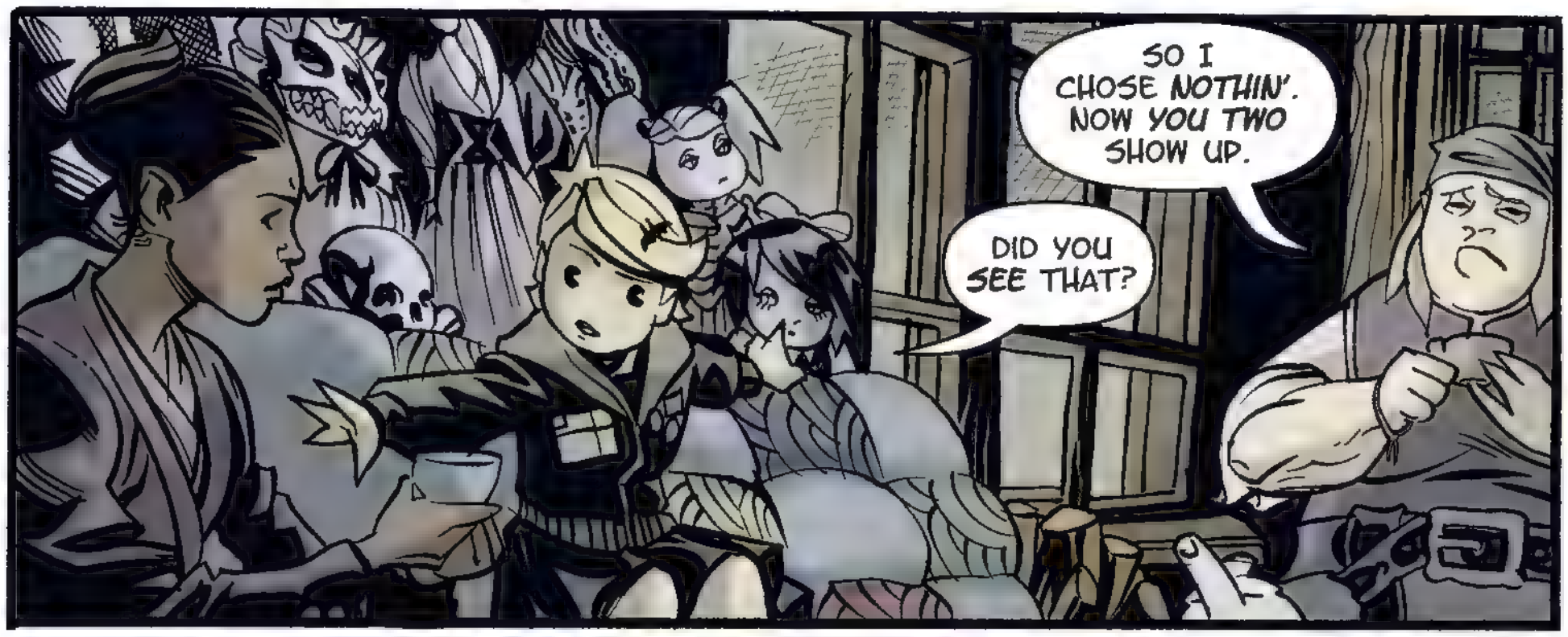
SO YOU'RE ALOYSIUS'S GREAT *GRANDNIECE*, EH? *LAST* O' THE CRUMRIN *WITCHES*.

I *GUESS* SO.

IT'S JUST FOR A *DAY* OR TWO.


AIN'T MADE UP ME *MIND* YET. I KEPT OUTTA TROUBLE ALL THESE YEARS.


HAD TO STAY AWAY FROM *REGULAR* FOLK. RAVANNA'S *LAW*, SEE? IT WAS WITCHES OR *NOTHIN'*.


SO I CHOSE *NOTHIN'*. NOW *YOU TWO* SHOW UP.
DID YOU *SEE* THAT?

WHAT'S *WRONG*, DEAR. MY LITTLE FRIEND GIVIN' YOU THE *WILLIES*?

ARE THEY *NIGHT THINGS*?
NOPE, I *MADE* 'EM.
HOW?

BUGGERED IF I KNOW. DIDN'T LEARN IT IN NO BOOK. THE TRICK JUST COMES TO ME.

LIKE 'EM?

ACTUALLY, THEY'RE PRETTY COOL.

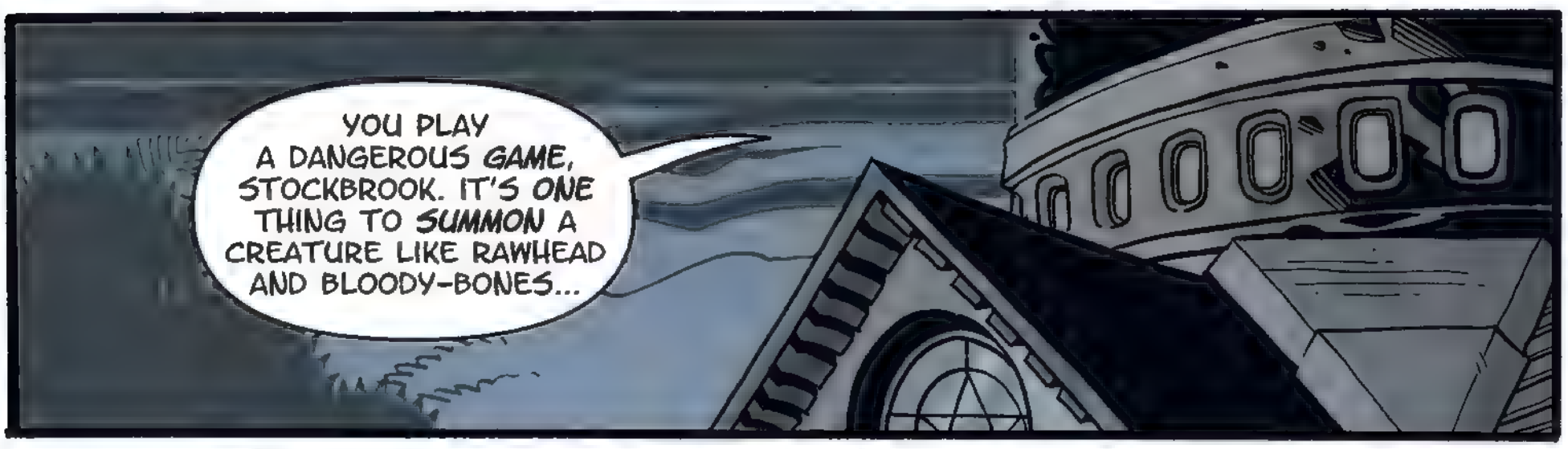
THAT'S A FIRST. THEY USED TO SCARE YOUNG CALLIE HERE SOMETHIN' AWFUL WHEN SHE WERE A GIRL. ME HUSBAND DIDN'T MUCH LIKE 'EM EITHER.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, IT JUST COMES TO YOU? FROM WHERE?

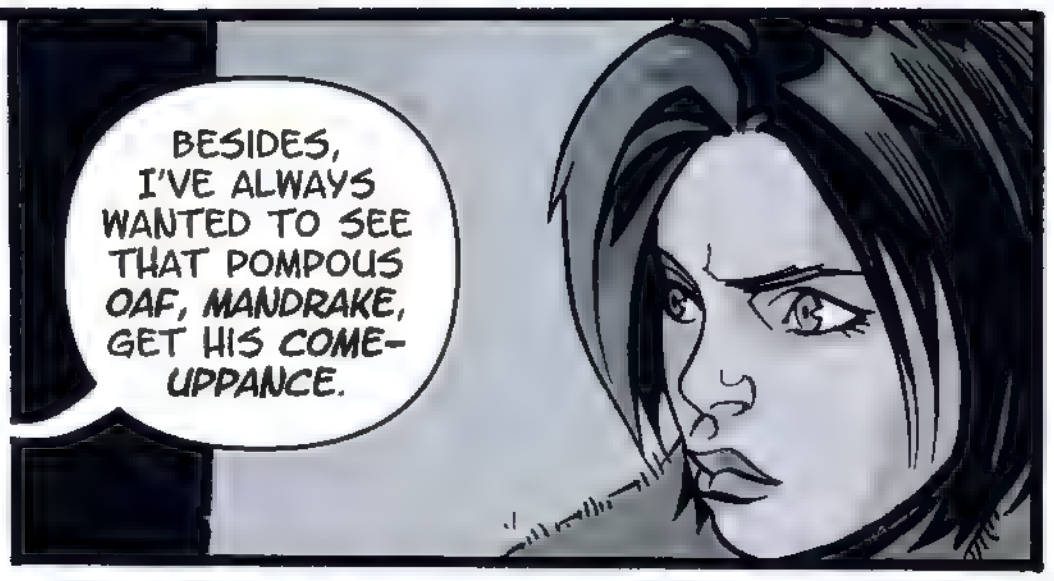
WHERE DID YA THINK MAGIC COMES FROM, EH?

ALL SORCERERS HAVE A SECRET POWER. IT DON'T COME FROM NO BOOK, BUT UP FROM THE DEEPEST PART O' YA.

IT'S MORE POWERFUL THAN ANYTHIN' OUTTA BOOKS. CAUSE IT'S YOURS.


YOU PLAY A DANGEROUS GAME, STOCKBROOK. IT'S ONE THING TO SUMMON A CREATURE LIKE RAWHEAD AND BLOODY-BONES...

...BUT TO CONTROL HIM...
ARE YOU SAYING NO, MARSHAL?


BESIDES, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE THAT POMPOUS OAF, MANDRAKE, GET HIS COME-UPPANCE.

IF YOU FAIL, IT WILL NOT COME BACK TO ME.
DON'T BE SO SURE ABOUT THAT, STOCKBROOK.

HAH, WHAT WOULD MY CHANCES BE IF I DID?

SHE SAID WE'D HEAR THE ALARM IF ANYONE COMES.
YOU THINK ALOYSIUS WOULDN'T THINK OF THAT? SUE ME IF I'M A LITTLE EXTRA CAUTIOUS.

DO YOU HAVE A SECRET POWER?
IF I DID, I NEVER FOUND IT.

ME NEITHER. I PROBABLY DON'T HAVE ONE.
I DON'T KNOW.

YOUR POETRY CAN BE PRETTY POWERFUL.
ARE YOU MAKING FUN OF ME?

LET'S WASTE NO TIME.
IF IT'S WHO I THINK IT IS, I'D PROCEED WITH CAUTION.
WHY-

I DO WISH YOU'D LEARN TO RESPECT *EXPERIENCE*, COUNCILOR.

THEY MUST HAVE *FOLLOWED* YOU.

A *TRACKING* SPELL.

IMPOSSIBLE.

HE'D NEED SOMETHING WITH A PIECE OF COURTNEY'S *PSYCHE* IN IT.

I TOOK *EVERYTHING*, DIDN'T I?

IT'S HIM. HE'S USING *HIMSELF*.

GOOD HEAVENS! WHO IS THIS SORCERESS?
SHE'S FROM BEFORE YOUR TIME.
BUT HER POWER HAS GROWN CONSIDERABLY.
BEYOND YOURS?
WE SHALL-

STAY BACK, DEMON!

I TOLD YOU, IT'S JUST A GOLEM-

UNCLE A!

>GASP<

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE FOLLOWED US.

CRISP.
NEED I REMIND YOU I AM A SORCERER FROM BIRTH, FROM A LINE DATING BACK OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS.
I AM BORN OF MAGIC!
WHILE YOU ARE MERELY CRUMRIN'S PET PROJECT.
MAYBE SO.

LET ME SHOW YOU WHAT HE *TAUGHT* ME.

GET BACK *INSIDE!*

LET ME *GO!* I'VE GOT TO *HELP* HIM!

UNCLE A...

STOP HIM, CHILDREN. SEND HIM AWAY.

I'M AFRAID THEY ARE NO LONGER YOUR CHILDREN, CERRIDWEN OLDS.

THEY ARE MINE.

CRUMRIN! HELP ME!

PLEASE! DON'T LET HER KILL ME!

I WARNED YOU, TRIANNE.

CALPURNIA IS A DEADLY FOE.

YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT JUST HOW DEADLY.

Chapter Three

>GASP<
>SPUTTER<
HAVE WE COME FULL CIRCLE, IS THAT IT? THE STUDENT HAS BECOME THE MASTER?
I'VE LEARNED A LOT SINCE WE PARTED WAYS, ALOYSIUS. I THINK YOU'LL BE SURPRISED.
NO!
VERY WELL. SURPRISE ME.

I WISH THERE WERE SOME *OTHER* WAY-

AS DO *I*, MY DEAR.

SLEEP.

OH, CALPURNIA. ALWAYS TRYING TO *SHOW OFF* WHEN A *SIMPLE* SPELL WILL SUFFICE.

YOU OLD...

...SMART-ASS...

ONE RARELY APPRECIATES WHAT ONE HAS UNTIL IT'S TAKEN AWAY.

ONLY NOW DID COURTNEY REALIZE HOW MUCH COMFORT SHE'D TAKEN IN THE FACT THAT THE MOST POWERFUL BEING WHO WALKED THE EARTH WAS LOOKING AFTER HER.

THIS LUXURY MAY HAVE BEEN WHAT ALLOWED HER TO BECOME SUCH AN EXPERT AT MAKING ENEMIES.

WHICH, IRONICALLY, MADE ALOYSIUS HIMSELF HER MASTERPIECE.

COURTNEY?
DON'T BE TIRESOME!

COME NOW. THERE'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF.

COURTNEY?

BLAST IT, GIRL.

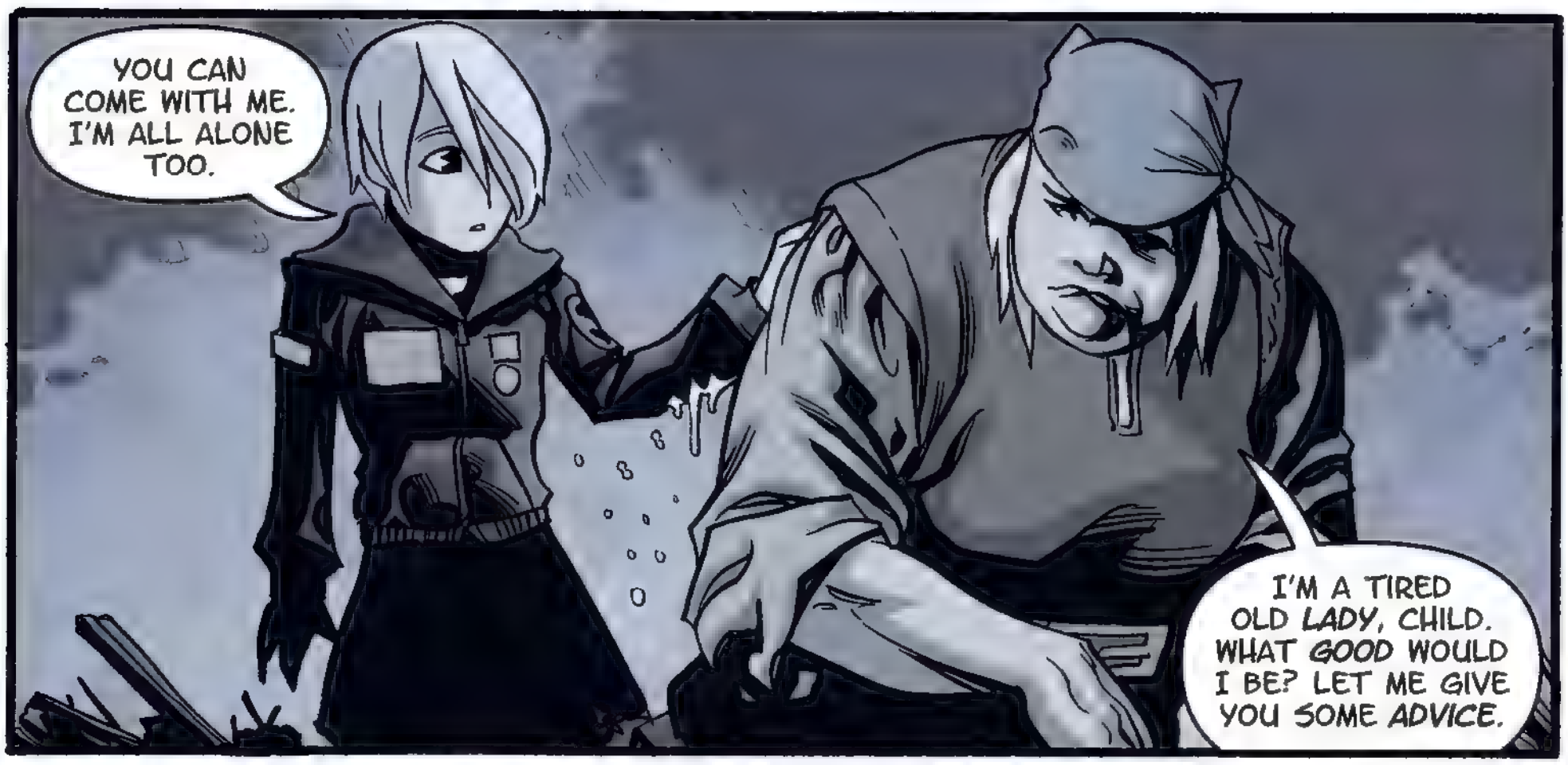
WHERE ARE YOU?

I THINK HE'S GONE.

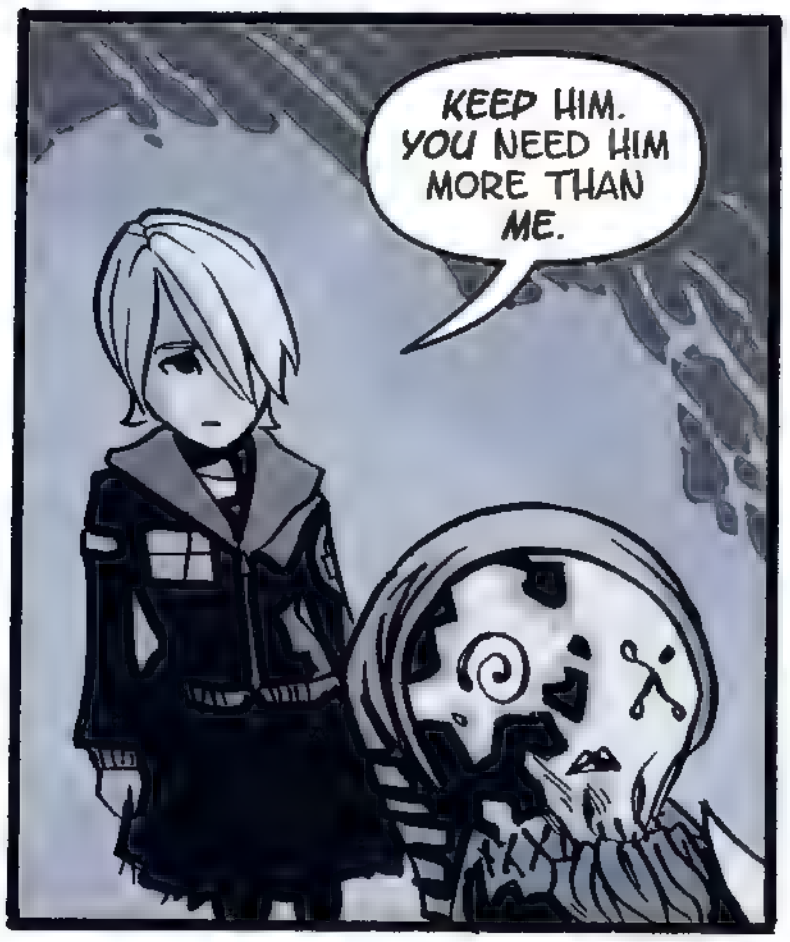
FOR NOW. YOU CAN'T STAY HERE.

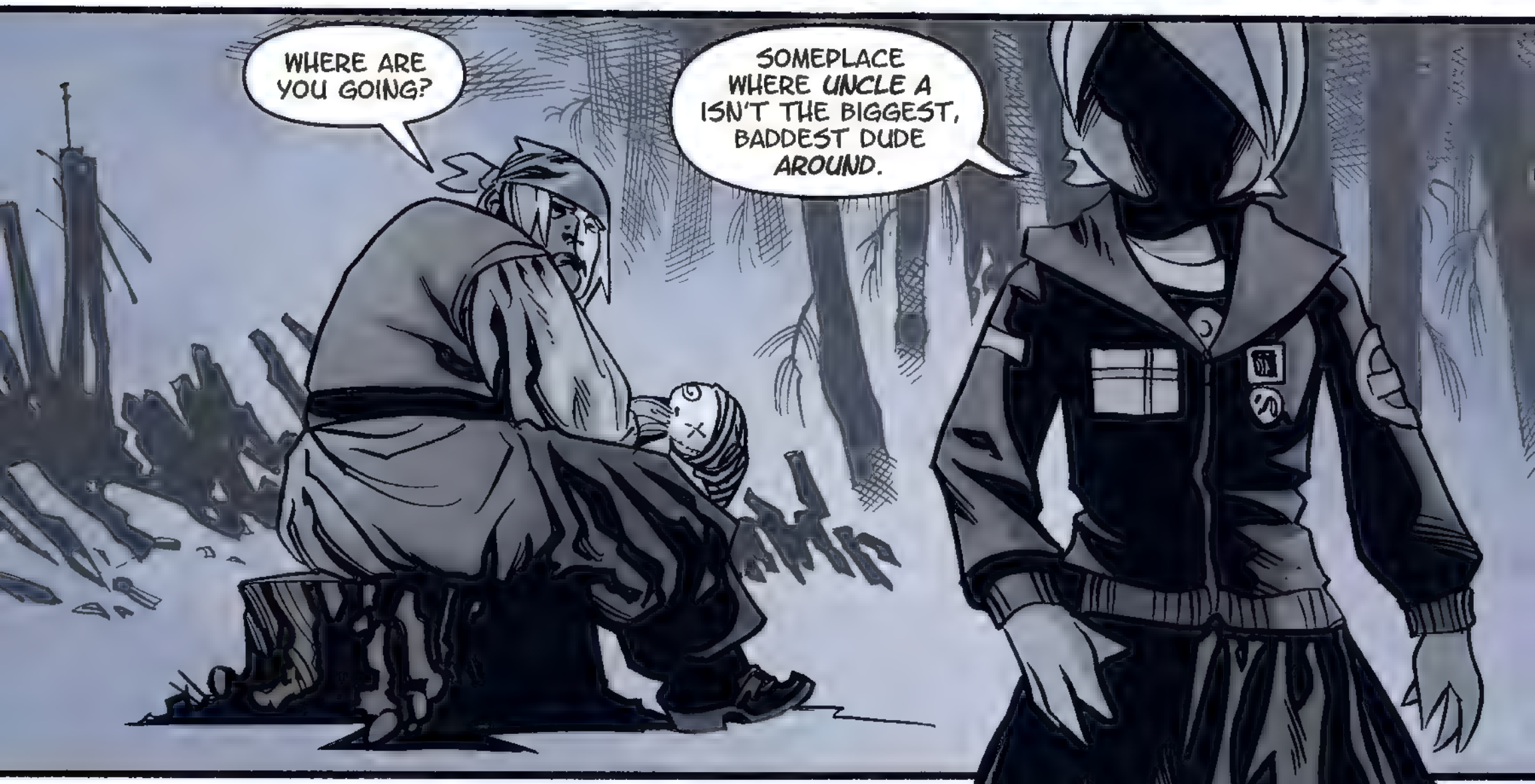
I'M SORRY.

NOT THAT THERE'S MUCH LEFT ANYWAY.


YOU CAN COME WITH ME. I'M ALL ALONE TOO.
I'M A TIRED OLD *LADY*, CHILD. WHAT *GOOD* WOULD I BE? LET ME GIVE YOU SOME *ADVICE*.

DON'T WAIT TILL YOU'RE ON THE *RUN*, OR *MY* AGE, BEFORE YOU REALIZE YOU NEED *FRIENDS*.


KEEP HIM. *YOU* NEED HIM MORE THAN *ME*.


WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
SOMEPLACE WHERE *UNCLE A* ISN'T THE BIGGEST, BADDEST DUDE *AROUND*.

I'M AFRAID THE MATTER HAS PROVEN TRICKIER THAN I *EXPECTED*.

SHE'S A *RESOURCEFUL* GIRL.

ARE YOU *UP* TO THE TASK OR *NOT*? SHALL I SUMMON A *NEW* DETAIL OF MARSHALS?

I HARDLY THINK ANYONE *HERE* WILL SUCCEED WHERE *KRISTOFF TRIANNE* AND I HAVE *FAILED*.

I WILL BRING HER TO TRIAL IN *48 HOURS*.

SEE THAT YOU *DO*.

AND IT WILL BE A *PUBLIC* HEARING, BEFORE THE *WHOLE COMMUNITY*.

EVERYTHING COMES TO LIGHT. NO MORE *SECRETS*.

AS PROMISED.

THAT INCLUDES THE EVIDENCE THAT *HECTOR HUGHES* SUMMONED THE *HOBGOBLIN, RAWHEAD* AND *BLOODY BONES*, TO DO AWAY WITH MEMBERS OF THE *COUNCIL*.

AND THE *CHILDREN'S* TESTIMONY THAT SHE *SAVED THEIR LIVES* IN THE GOBLIN *UNDERWORLD*.

BELIEVE ME, ALOYSIUS.

ALL FACTS WILL BE TAKEN INTO *ACCOUNT*.

NOT LEAST THAT YOU SURRENDERED MY *SON* TO THE *TWILIGHT KING*...

AND TOLD *NO ONE*.

IT WON'T JUST BE YOUR *NIECE* ON TRIAL.

WELL, MISS CRISP? YOU'VE *HEARD* THE CHARGES. DO YOU HAVE ANY *EXCUSE* FOR BREAKING OUR LAWS, AFTER WE *ACCEPTED* YOU AS ONE OF OUR *OWN*?

ALOYSIUS WAS *RIGHT*. *YOU'RE* JUST AS BLIND AS *HE* IS.

YOU'LL SOON WATCH *HELPLESSLY* AS YOUR WISE PANEL OF COUNCILORS BREAKS *EVERY ONE* OF THE LAWS SET DOWN TO CONTROL THE COVEN'S USE OF *MAGIC*.

THEY'LL *ENSLAVE* THE *NIGHT THINGS*, AND SET THEMSELVES AS *MASTERS* OF *ORDINARY* FOLK.

IF YOU'RE *LUCKY*, YOU WON'T *LIVE* LONG ENOUGH TO SEE YOUR *FINE, UPSTANDING* COMMUNITY OF *SORCERERS* ATTEMPT TO MAKE THEMSELVES *GODS* OF THE *EARTH*.

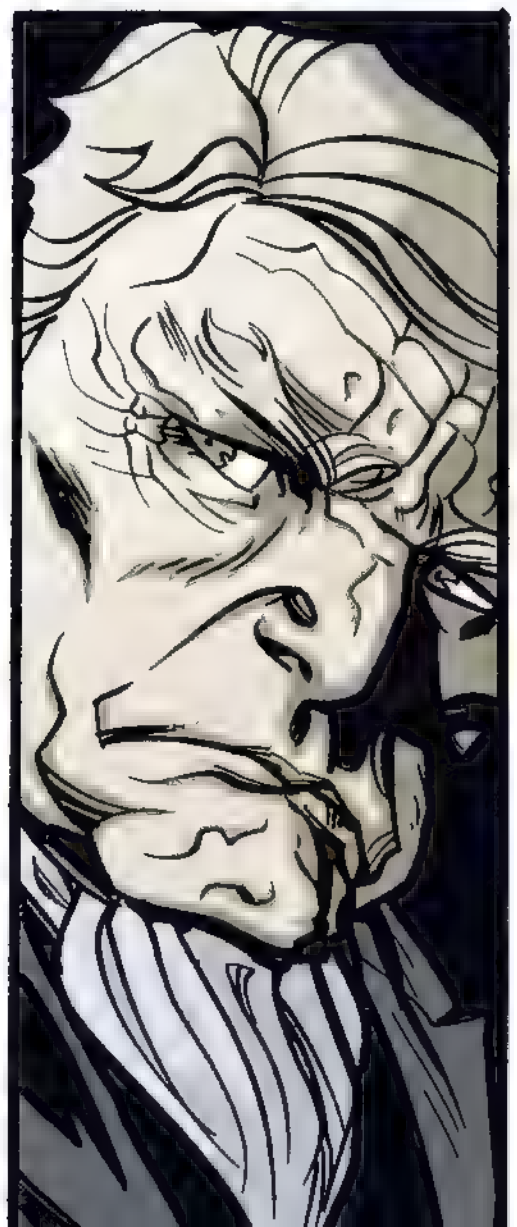
OR THE *CARNAGE* THAT'LL *RESULT*.

THANK YOU, MISS CRISP, BUT I THINK WE'VE HEARD ENOUGH OF YOUR ALARMISM.

INDEED. I DON'T THINK WE NEED BOTHER WITH A TRIAL. WE'RE ALL AGREED, AREN'T WE?
WE CONDEMN YOU TO EXILE, CALPURNIA CRISP.

YOU WILL LEAVE HILLSBOROUGH WITH NO MEMORY OF YOUR LIFE HERE.

YOU ARE NO LONGER A WITCH.
ARE WE AGREED, WOODRUE?



OH, UNCLE *ALOYSIUS*. I WAS LOOKING FOR *COURTNEY*.

DID YOU *LOSE* SOMETHING?

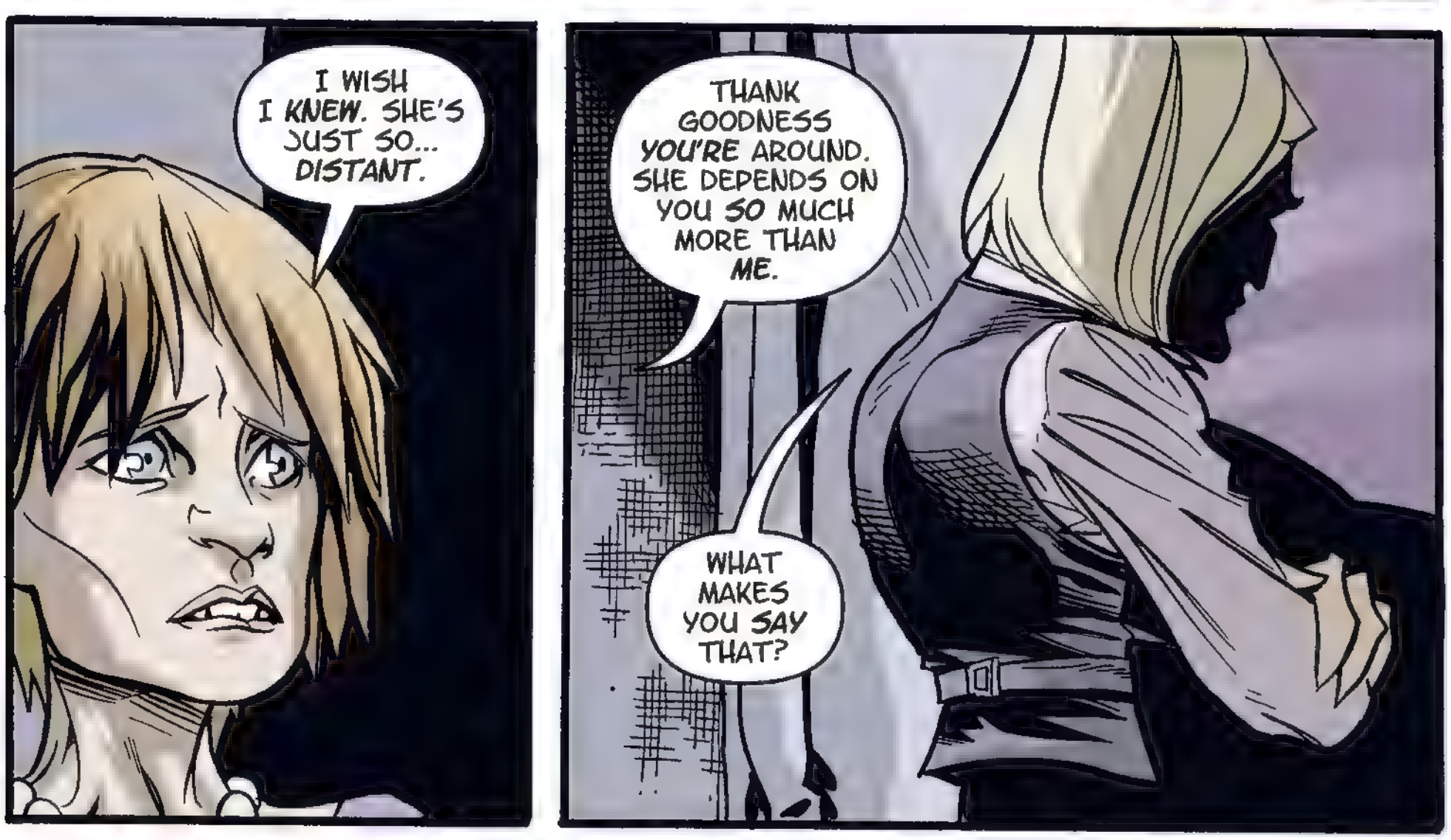
ERRR... JUST LOOKING FOR ANYTHING THAT *MEANS* SOMETHING TO COURTNEY.

DO *YOU* KNOW WHERE SHE'S GOTTEN TO? I FEEL LIKE I HAVEN'T SEEN HER FOR *DAYS*.

SHE'S GONE *CAMPING* WITH SOME FRIENDS FROM *SCHOOL*.

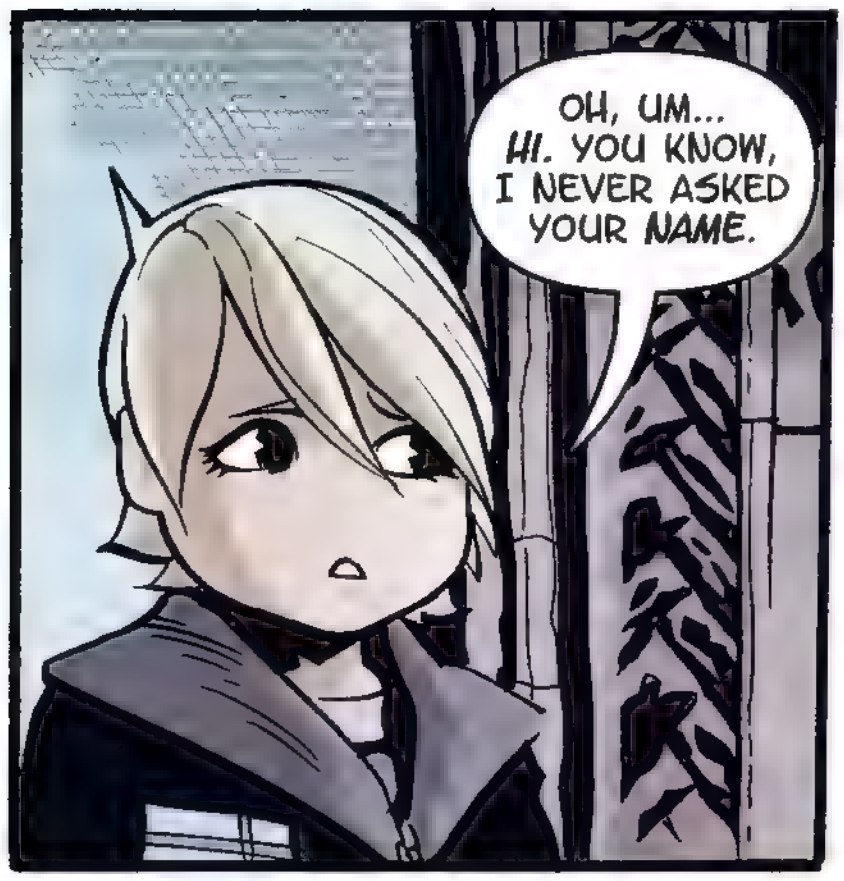
SHE DIDN'T *TELL* YOU? THAT'S ODD.

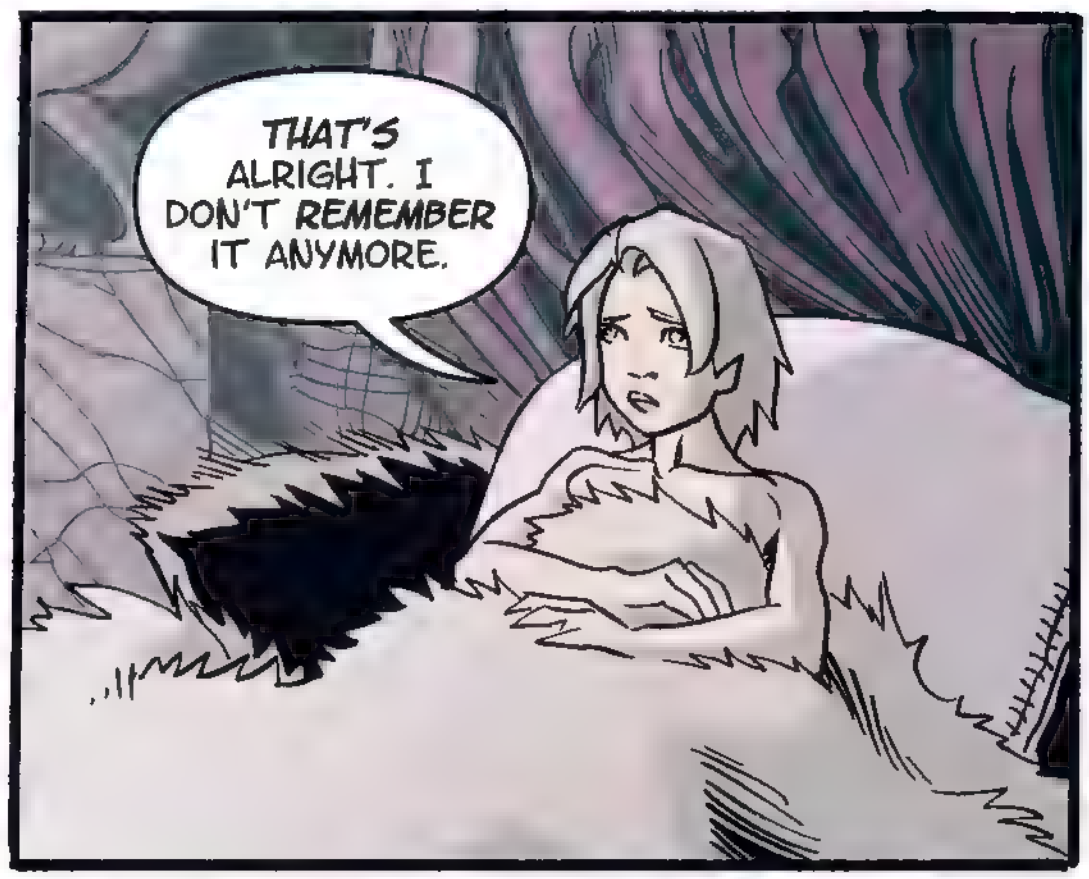
THANK GOODNESS SHE'S FINALLY MAKING FRIENDS. WHY DIDN'T SHE TELL ME?
THEY GROW UP SO FAST, EH?

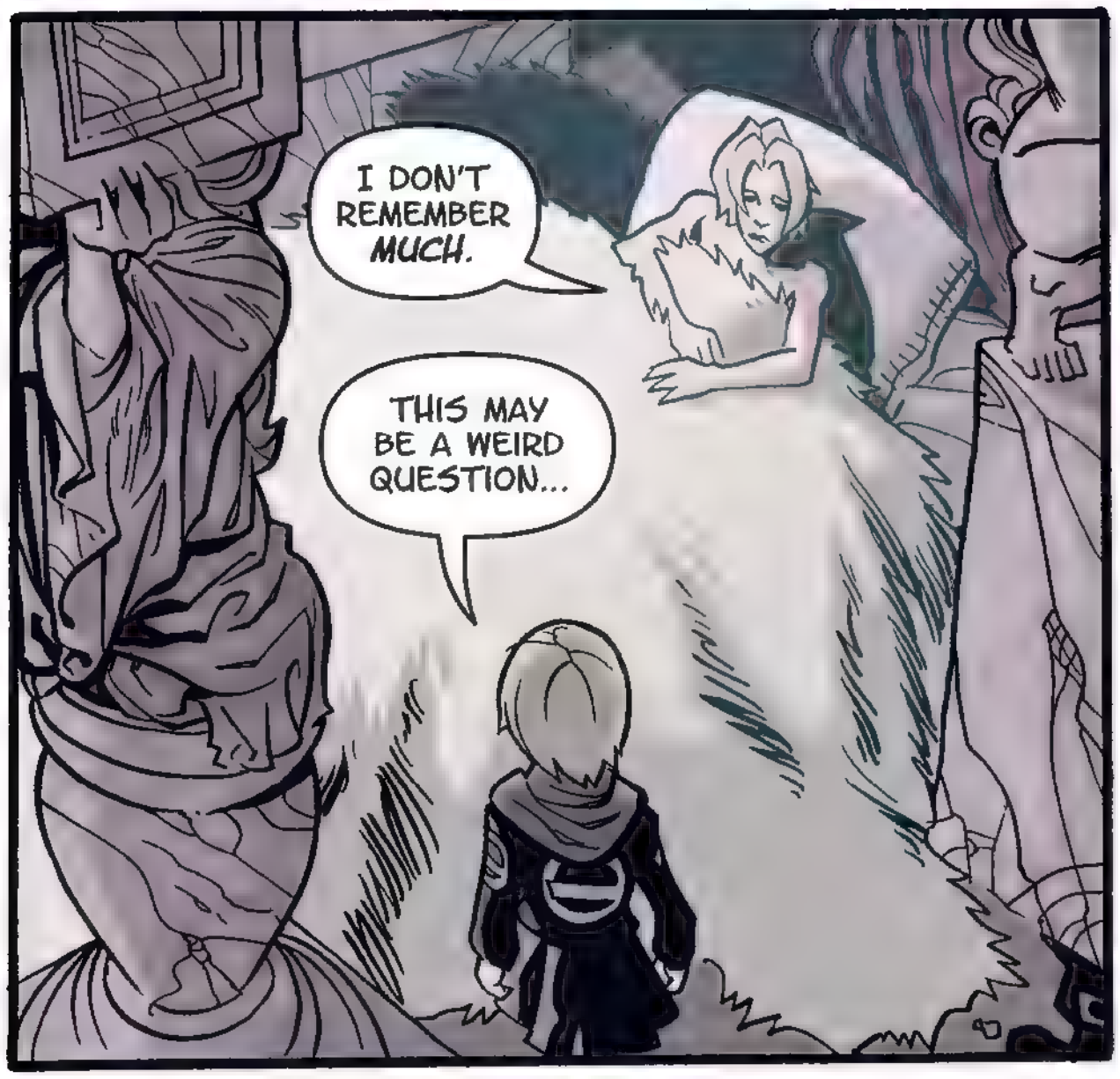

I WISH I KNEW. SHE'S JUST SO... DISTANT.
THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE AROUND. SHE DEPENDS ON YOU SO MUCH MORE THAN ME.
WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?

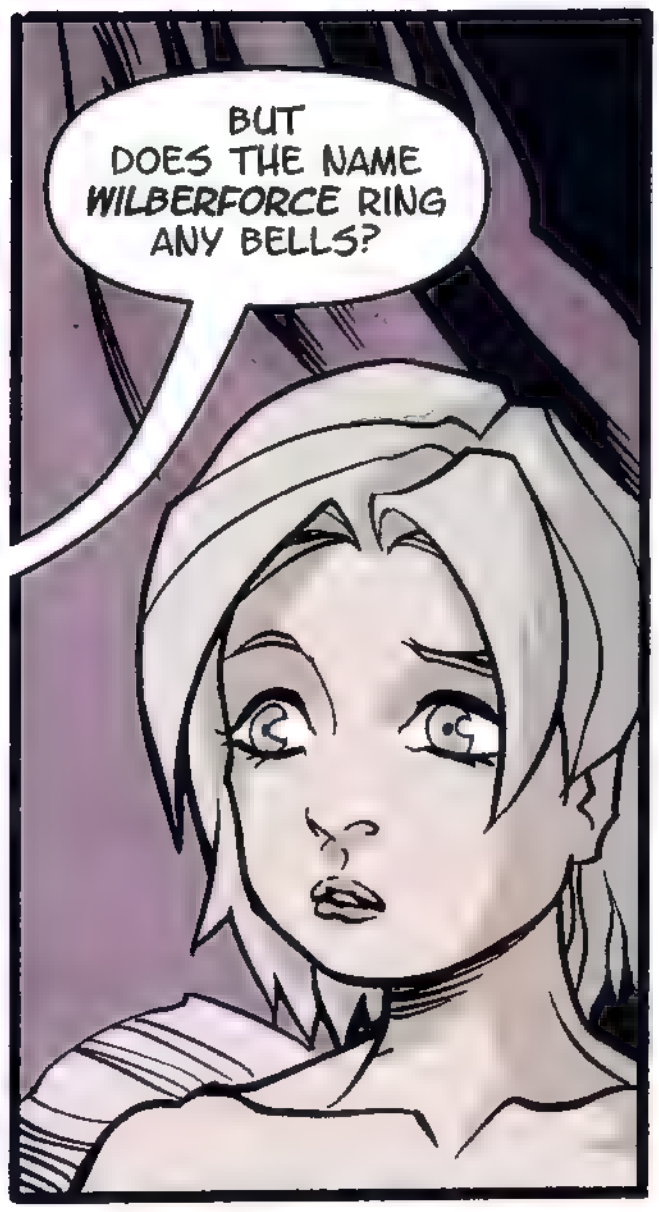
I WAS SNEAKING IT BACK. IT'S MOSTLY JUST SOME ANGSTY POEMS.
COURTNEY'S DIARY
DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!
THERE'S ONE ABOUT YOU. IT SAYS IT ALL.

I HATED TAKING IT, BUT I'D DO ANYTHING TO UNDERSTAND HER BETTER.
I'LL PUT THIS WHERE IT BELONGS.
HELLO? I KNOCKED, BUT...
JUST ME.
ANYONE HOME?


OH, UM... HI. YOU KNOW, I NEVER ASKED YOUR NAME.


THAT'S ALRIGHT. I DON'T REMEMBER IT ANYMORE.


I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH.
THIS MAY BE A WEIRD QUESTION...


BUT DOES THE NAME WILBERFORCE RING ANY BELLS?

I CAME HERE TO RESCUE MY *BROTHER.*

ALOYSIUS.

YES! BUT I WAS *CAUGHT.*

IT'S ALL RIGHT *THERE.* HOW COULD I HAVE *FORGOTTEN?* THE DUCHESS GAVE US A *CHOICE...*

"...TO CONDEMN *OURSELVES...*

LET HIM GO. I'LL STAY WITH YOU.

AND *YOU,* MORTAL? WHAT IS *YOUR* CHOICE?

"...OR EACH *OTHER."*

I CHOOSE...

...FOR *WILL* TO STAY.

IT WAS ONLY *AFTERWARD* THAT THE DUCHESS *EXPLAINED* HER BARGAIN. IF *HE'D* CHOSEN TO STAY *INSTEAD*, WE WOULD *BOTH* HAVE BEEN FREED.

BUT HE *LEFT* ME HERE.

WHY DID HE *DO* THAT? I THOUGHT HE *CARED* ABOUT ME!

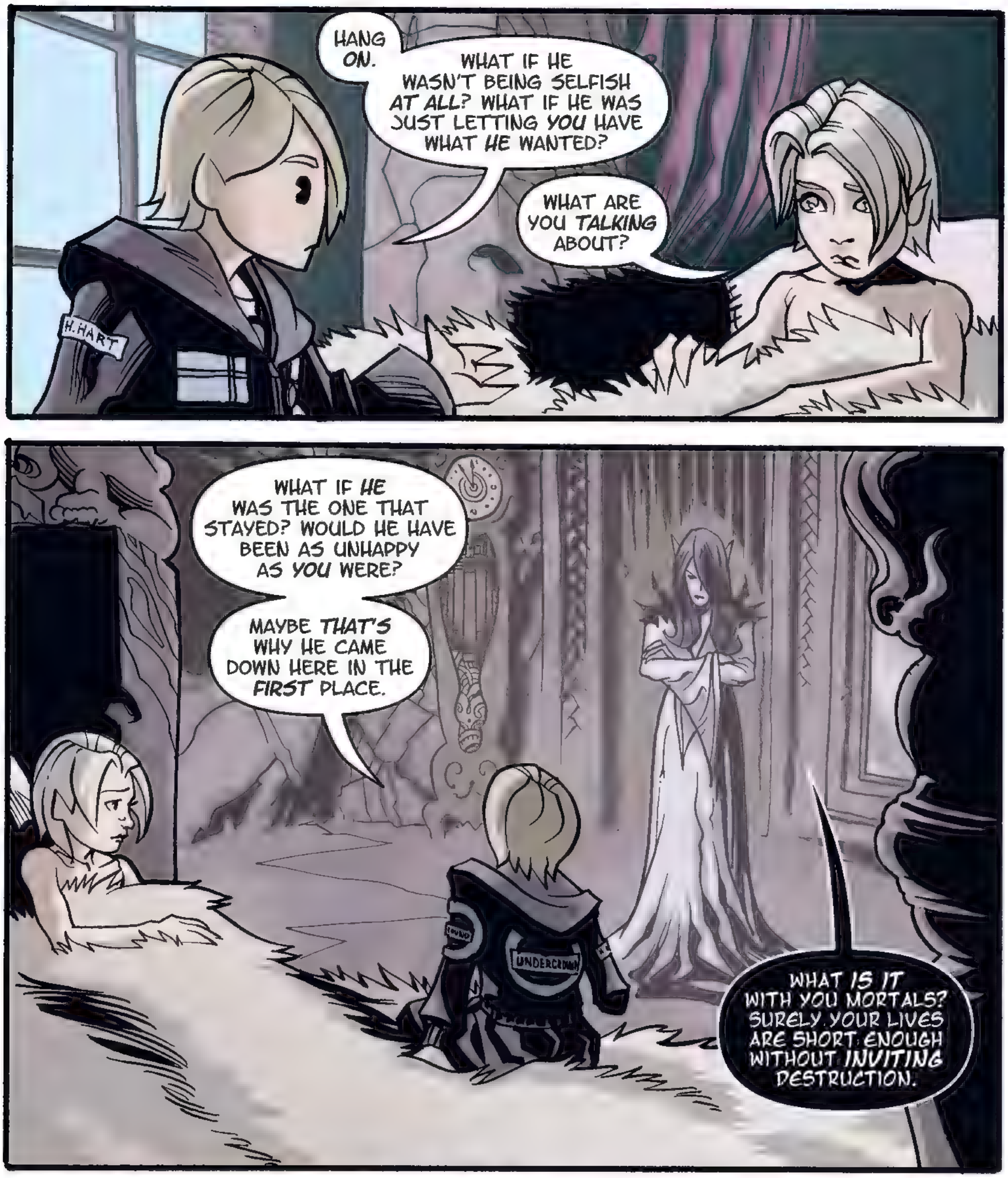
IS IT *SO* AWFUL HERE?

NO, IT'S *OKAY*. SHE TAKES *CARE* OF ME. AND I'VE SEEN SOME *WONDERFUL* THINGS, THINGS THAT *MORTALS* WOULD NEVER *BELIEVE*.

BUT IT'S NOT *HOME*. I MISS THE *SUNLIGHT*, AND THE WAY THE *AIR* USED TO *SMELL*.

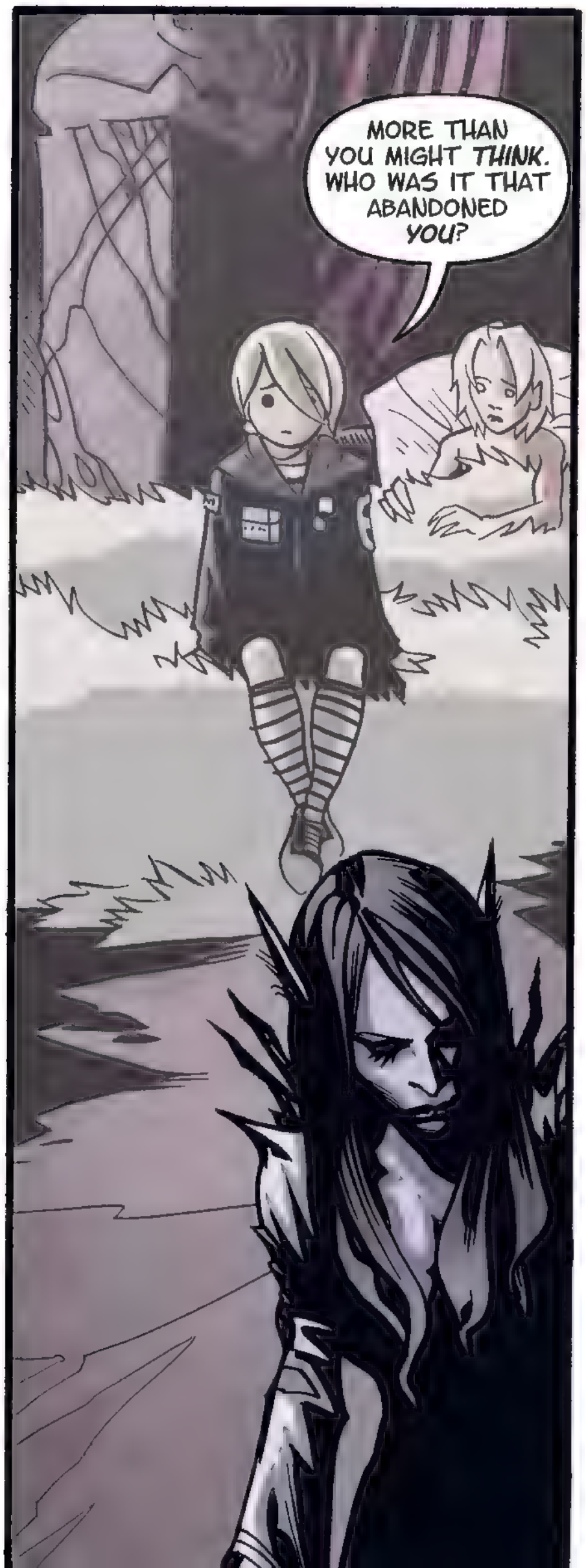
I *MISS* MY FAMILY. EVEN *ALOYSIUS*.

SELFISH AS HE IS.


HANG ON.
WHAT IF HE WASN'T BEING SELFISH AT ALL? WHAT IF HE WAS JUST LETTING YOU HAVE WHAT HE WANTED?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
H.HART
WHAT IF HE WAS THE ONE THAT STAYED? WOULD HE HAVE BEEN AS UNHAPPY AS YOU WERE?
MAYBE THAT'S WHY HE CAME DOWN HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
UNDERCROWN
WHAT IS IT WITH YOU MORTALS? SURELY YOUR LIVES ARE SHORT ENOUGH WITHOUT INVITING DESTRUCTION.
YOU DON'T FOOL ME ANYMORE. YOU ACT LIKE THE BIGGEST HARD-ASS AROUND TO SCARE PEOPLE OFF.
AND YOU SUPPOSE I'M NOT AS DANGEROUS AS I PRETEND? I WOULDN'T ADVISE TESTING THAT THEORY.

I THINK YOU'RE JUST HIDING YOUR LONELINESS.

WHAT CAN YOU POSSIBLY KNOW OF LONELINESS, MORTAL?


MORE THAN YOU MIGHT THINK. WHO WAS IT THAT ABANDONED YOU?

MY MOTHER.
WHEN YOUR KIND CUT DOWN THE FORESTS AND DESTROYED THE WILD WORLD, SHE REFUSED TO RETREAT.
SHE SAID SHE WOULD PERISH WITHOUT SUNLIGHT.

I DON'T BLAME HER. I MISS THE SUN SO MUCH. I MISS THE GREEN. NO ONE, FAERIE OR MORTAL, WOULD FORSAKE THE WORLD ABOVE WILLINGLY.

THAT'S WHY I CHOSE AN INFANT MORTAL TO BE MY NEW FAMILY.
I THOUGHT HE WOULDN'T MISS THE SUN.

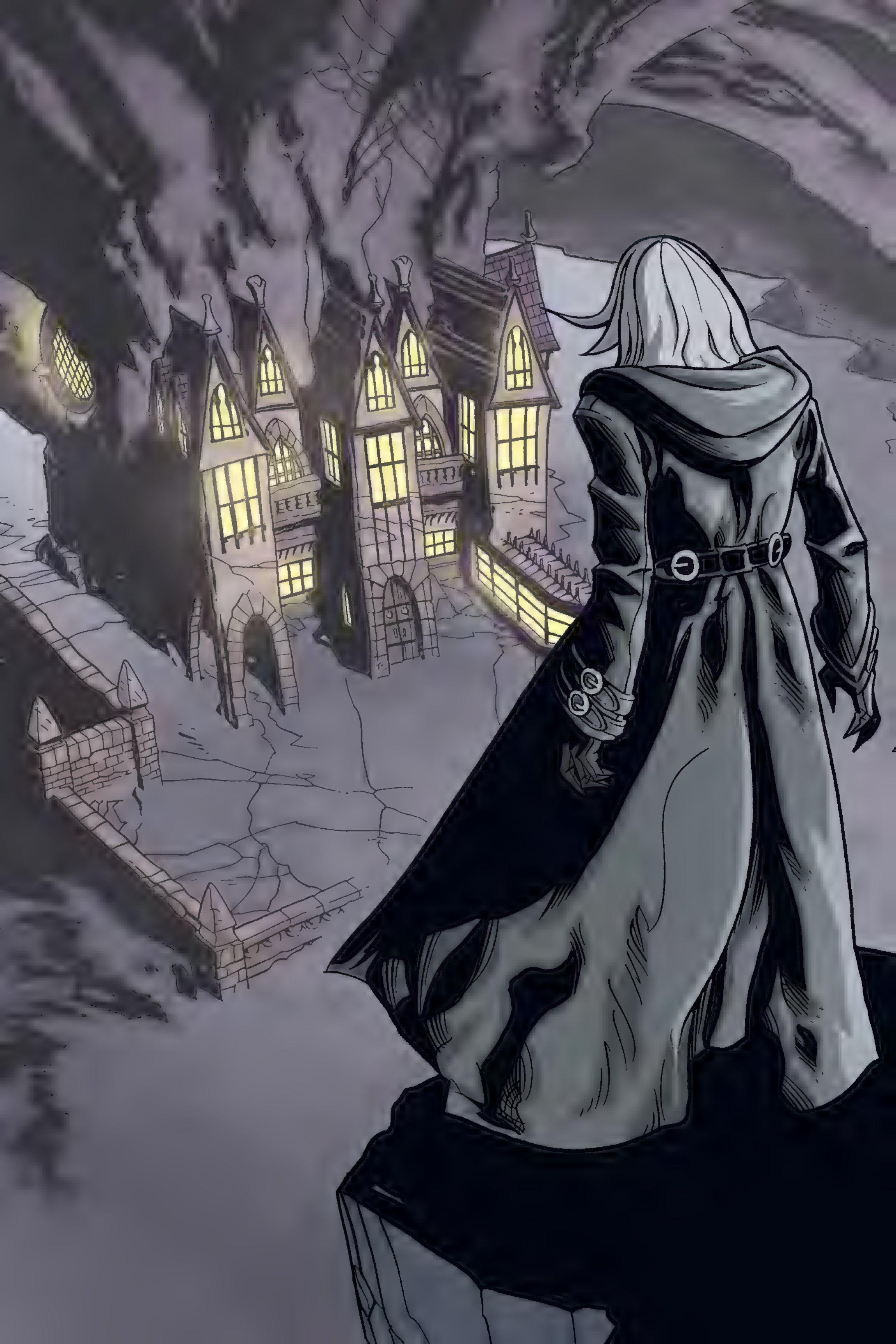
BUT, I WAS WRONG.

I DON'T THINK I'D MISS IT ALL THAT MUCH. OR ANYTHING ELSE UP THERE.

IF IT'S COMPANY YOU WANT, I'D LIKE TO STAY.
FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH.

PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT.

IT'S BETTER TO BE LONELY TOGETHER.



Chapter Four

CALPURNIA WAS *RIGHT*.

THIS WAS ALL A *CONSPIRACY* TO TAKE THE COUNCIL FROM *WOODRUE*.

ONLY *MANDRAKE* AND *CHARLES LONDON* STOOD IN THE WAY.

WE *NEVER COULD* DISCOVER WHAT MARSHAL HUGHS WOULD *GAIN* FROM THEIR DEATHS.

BUT WHAT IF HUGHS WAS ACTING UNDER *ORDERS*?

WHOSE?

THINK! WHO *BENEFITED*? WHO IS NOW THE *HEAD* OF THE COUNCIL, PUSHING POLICIES WHICH THEY *OPPOSED*?

STOCKBROOK!

GOODNESS, MY EARS ARE BURNING.

YOU THINK ME A VILLAIN, MY DEAR?

THOSE MEN CONSPIRED TO KEEP US ALL PRISONER IN THIS LITTLE TOWN FOREVER.

THE PUNISHMENT FOR ESCAPE WAS DEATH, AS YOU WELL KNOW.

YOUR GAME IS OVER. I'LL EXPOSE YOU!

TO WHOM?

EVEN YOUR FATHER AGREES WITH ME.

I'M SORRY, ISOBEL.

DESTROY THOSE FILES.

SHE'LL COME AROUND. EVERYONE ELSE HAS.

AND IF SHE *DOESN'T*?

YOU SAID IT *YOURSELF*, TRIANNE.

THERE'S NO ROOM IN OUR FUTURE FOR *DOUBTERS*.

UNCLE ALOYSIUS HAD WARNED COURTNEY INNUMERABLE TIMES TO NEVER AGAIN VENTURE INTO THE TWILIGHT REALM OF THE FAERIES.

HE SAID THAT IT WAS THE ONE PLACE WHERE HIS POWERS WERE OUTMATCHED...

...AND IF THE FAERIES WERE DETERMINED TO KEEP HER...

...IT WOULD NOT BE WITHIN HIS POWER TO SAVE HER.

COURTNEY PRAYED THAT HE WAS TELLING THE TRUTH, AND NOT JUST TRYING TO FRIGHTEN HER.

EAT, LITTLE MORTAL. WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

THAT ONCE HAVING TASTED FAERIE FOOD, YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO LEAVE THIS PLACE?

HEH, NO, I SUPPOSE NOT.

MMMM! THIS IS INSANE.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

THE ORCHARDS OF THE KING, SWEETENED BY HIS OWN DARKNESS. YOU LIKE IT?

IT... IT'S THE BEST THING I'VE EVER TASTED.

EVEN DARKNESS HAS ITS MERITS.

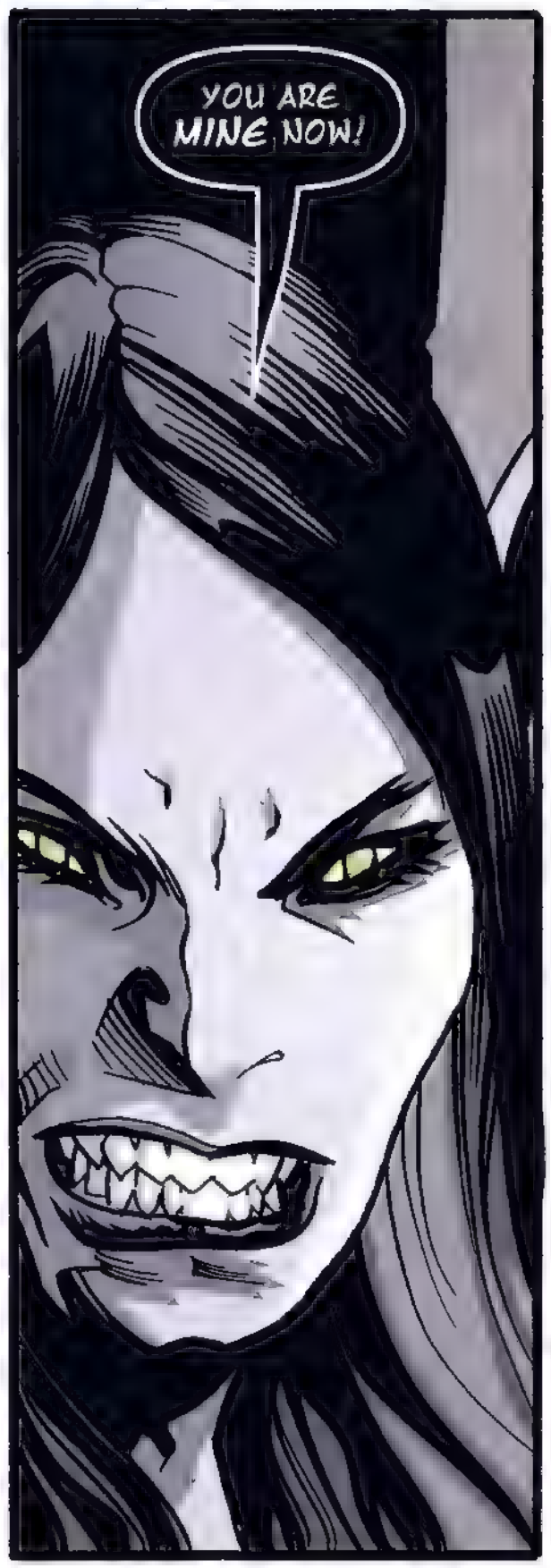
TRY THE ELDERFLOWER WINE.

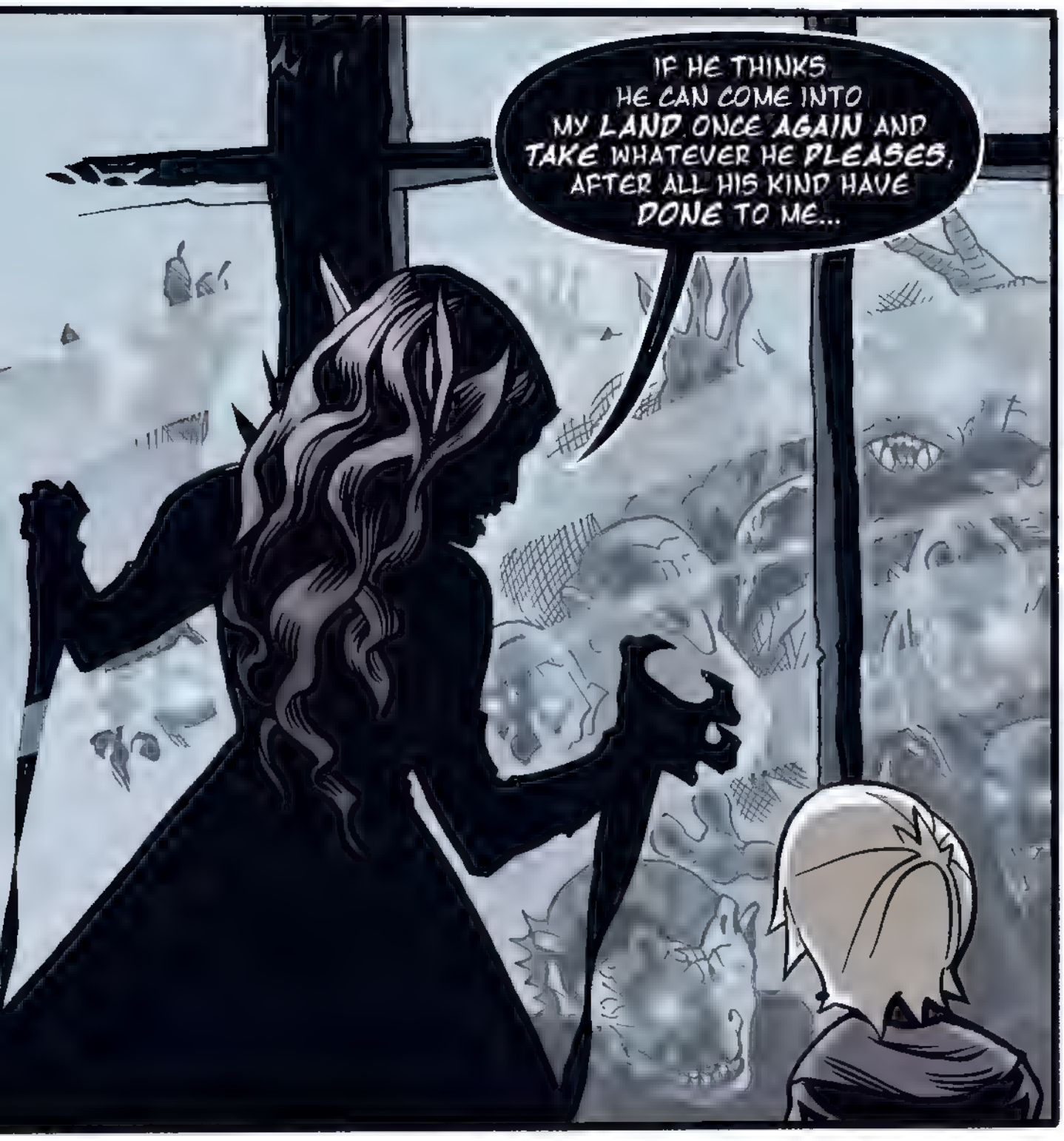
I NEVER THANKED MY UNCLE FOR BEING SO NICE TO ME. I DIDN'T KNOW HOW.

I DON'T WANT TO MAKE THAT MISTAKE AGAIN.

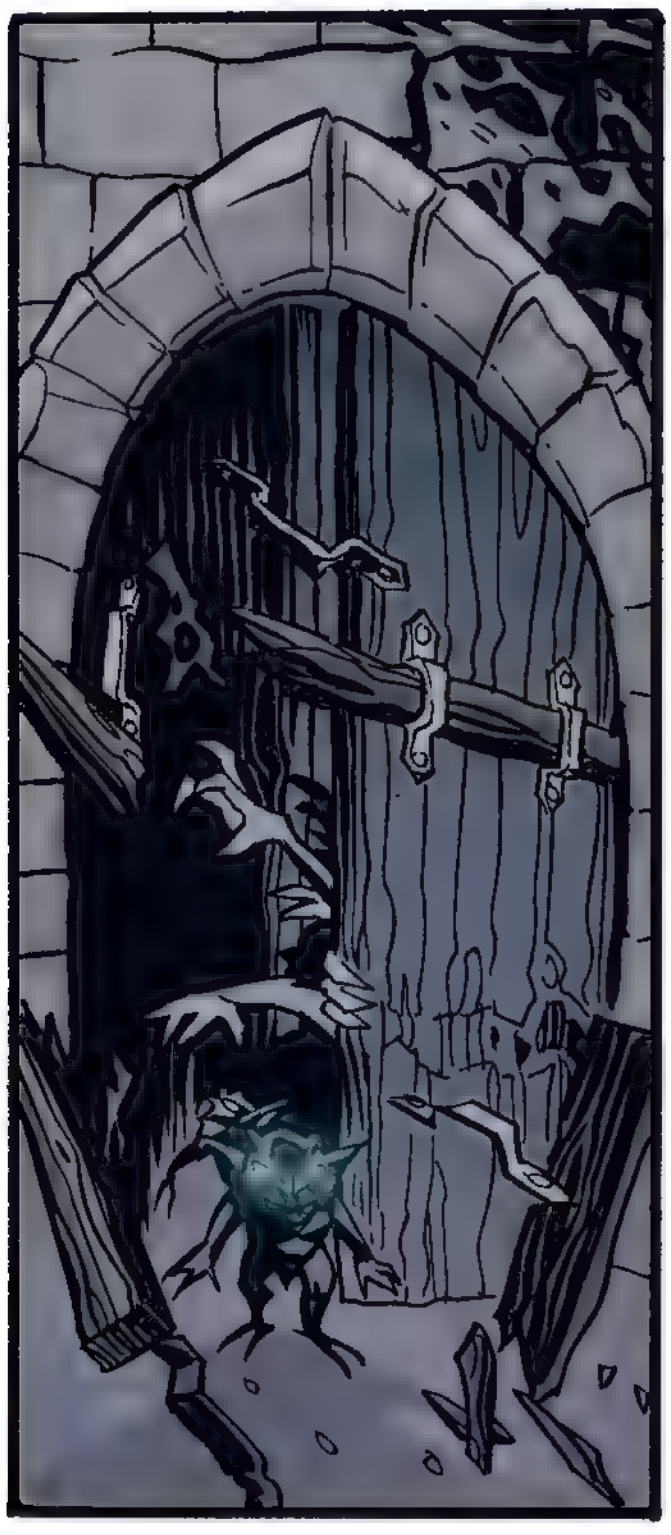
WHAT UNDER EARTH IS HAPPENING OUT THERE?
IT'S HIM.

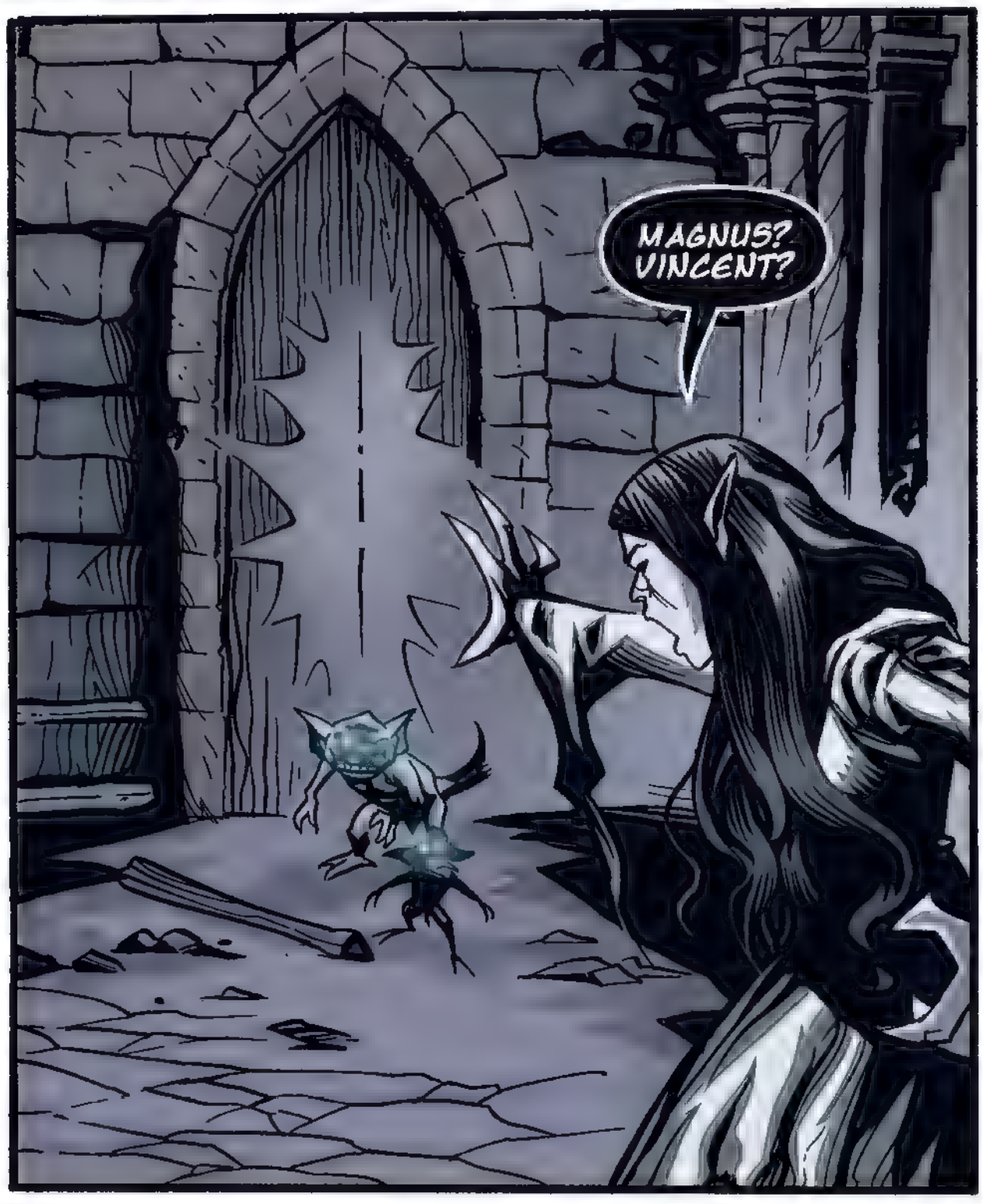
ALOYSIUS?
I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T THINK HE'D COME HERE. IS THERE A SECRET WAY OUT?
NO.


YOU ARE MINE, NOW!


IF HE THINKS HE CAN COME INTO MY LAND ONCE AGAIN AND TAKE WHATEVER HE PLEASES, AFTER ALL HIS KIND HAVE DONE TO ME...

HE WILL LEARN DIFFERENT.




MAGNUS? VINCENT?

FEAST!
WHOA, KITTY! STAY BACK.
AAAAGH!
STOP! DON'T MAKE ME DESTROY YOU!

BEHIND YOU!

THEY GOT THROUGH!

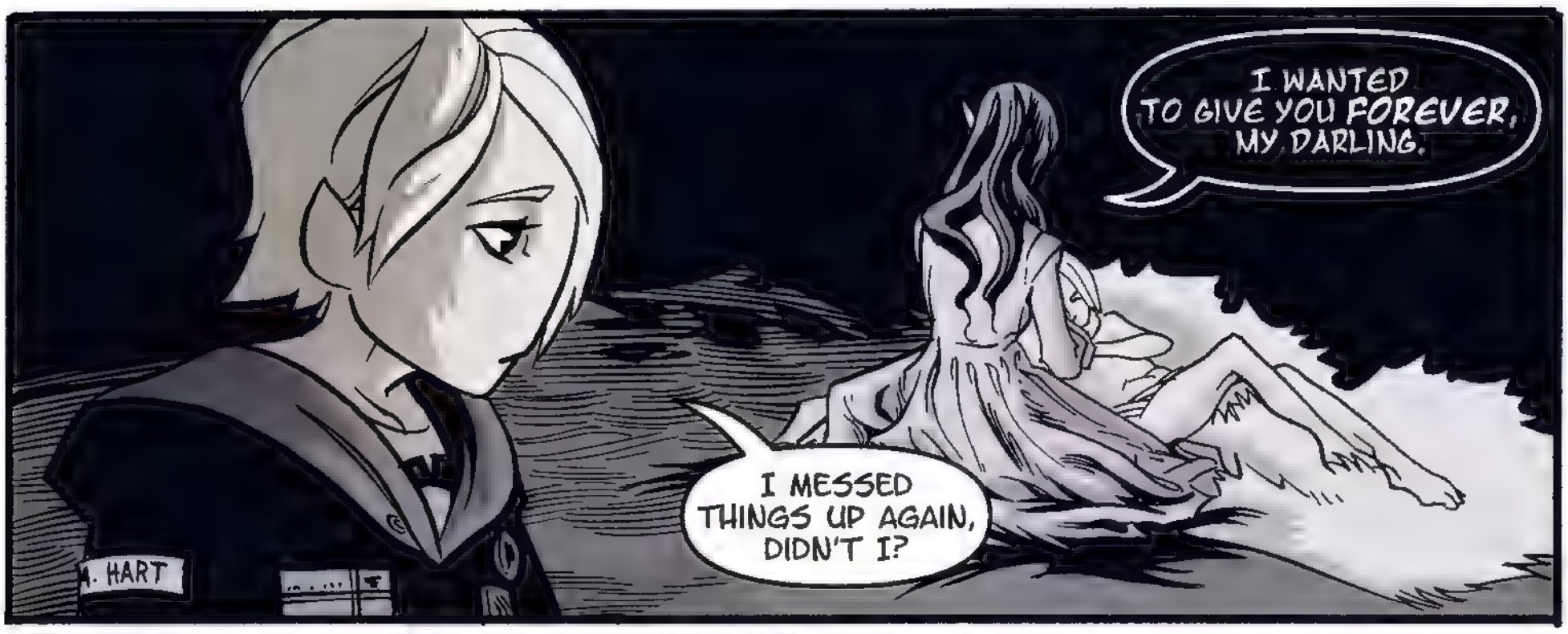
WE SHALL SEE ABOUT THAT.

NO!
RRRRRGH!

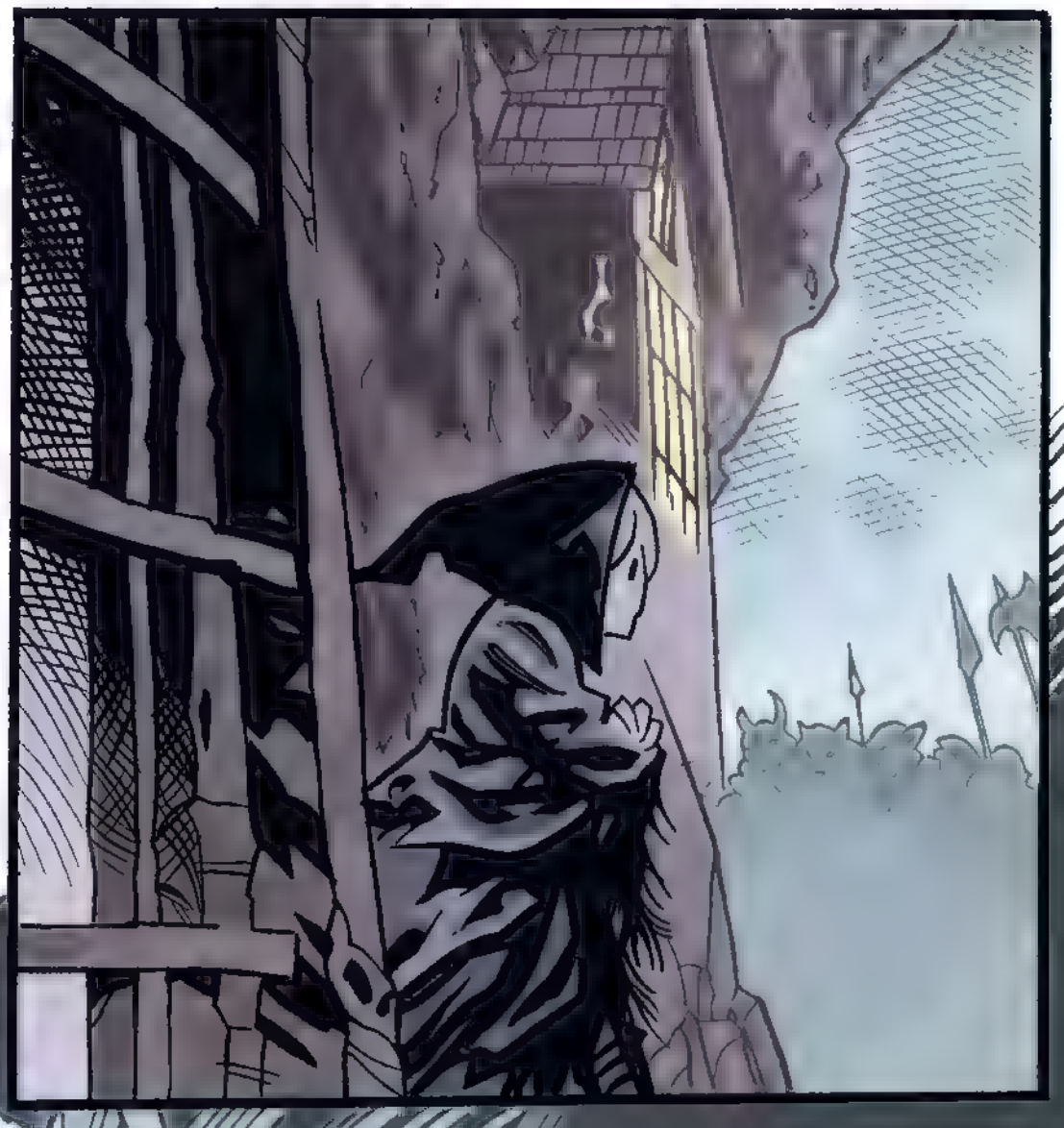
STOP!

DRINK THIS ELIXIR, LITTLE ONE. IT WILL HEAL YOU.

I HAVEN'T GOT LONG ANYWAY.


I WANTED TO GIVE YOU FOREVER, MY DARLING.
I MESSED THINGS UP AGAIN, DIDN'T I?
A. HART

I'M SO SORRY...



YOU DARE CHALLENGE ME ON MY OWN GROUND?
YOU CANNOT HAVE HER.
BE GONE, OR I WILL DESTROY YOU UTTERLY!
I WOULD NOT HAVE CHOSEN THIS OUTCOME, BUT YOU FORCE MY HAND.
GO IN PEACE, OR STAY, AND DIE.

SO BE IT!

A DECOY!

COURTNEY?

OKAY, UNCLE A. LET'S SEE HOW DEEP THESE TUNNELS GO.

YOU CAN'T CHASE ME-

-FOREVER...

NO NEED.

SLEEP.

HAVE YOU EVER AWOKEN OUT OF A DEEP SLEEP AND FOUND YOURSELF IN A PLACE YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE, FORGETTING FOR A MOMENT HOW YOU GOT THERE?

SOMETIMES, WHEN YOU REMEMBER AT LAST, IT'S A RELIEF. AND SOMETIMES IT'S NOT.

GOOD, YOU'RE *AWAKE*. PLEASE COME *THIS* WAY, MISS CRUMRIN.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I HAVE *LAID* ALL THE FACTS *BEFORE* YOU.

NONE HAVE BEEN DISPUTED BY THE *COUNCIL*. AND *NOW*...

MISS CRUMRIN WILL ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS.
I WILL?

JUST TELL THE COMPLETE TRUTH, COURTNEY, AND EVERYTHING WILL BE ALRIGHT.
OH YEAH? FOR WHO?

TRUST ME.

THANK YOU, PROFESSOR CRUMRIN. WE APPRECIATE YOUR CANDOR IN THIS MATTER. YOUR HONESTY IS COMMENDABLE.

BUT WE DON'T *REQUIRE* ANY MORE ANSWERS. OUR COURSE OF ACTION IS CLEAR.

MISS CRUMRIN HAS GONE UNSUPERVISED AND UNCONTROLLED FOR *TOO LONG*.

CLEARLY, ANY ATTEMPT AT *RE-EDUCATION* WOULD BE *FUTILE*.

THIS *COUNCIL*, AS *WITNESSED* BY THE GATHERED COVEN OF WITCHES, WARLOCKS, SORCERERS AND MYSTICS, *DECREES* THAT *COURTNEY CRUMRIN* SHALL BE *BANISHED* FROM OUR COMMUNITY...

...AND *STRIPPED* OF ALL KNOWLEDGE OF *MAGIC*.

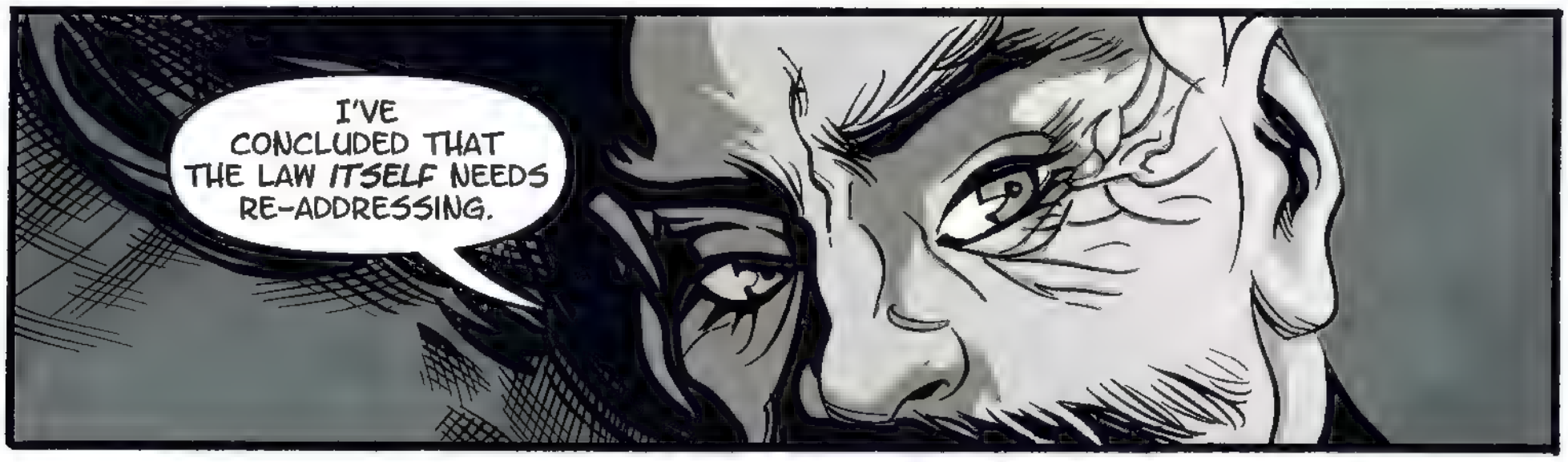
YOU CAN'T *DO* THAT!

IF I MAY ADD, COUNCILOR STOCKBROOK, BEING THAT PROFESSOR CRUMRIN BEARS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR MISS CRUMRIN'S BEHAVIOR...

...NOT TO MENTION A NUMBER OF TRANSGRESSIONS IN HIS OWN RIGHT, I VOTE THAT HE TOO BE EXILED.

EHEM, INDEED.
I BELIEVE IT'S HIGH TIME WE APPOINT AN OFFICIAL, COUNCIL-SANCTIONED ENFORCER OF RAVANNA'S LAW.

AS THE NEW HEAD OF THE COUNCIL, I HAVE GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT TO THAT POLICY...
AND TO ALOYSIUS CRUMRIN'S SELF-APPOINTED ROLE IN ITS ENFORCEMENT.


I'VE CONCLUDED THAT THE LAW ITSELF NEEDS RE-ADDRESSING.

THE MAGICAL PEOPLE OF HILLSBOROUGH SHOULD NOT BE *PRISONERS* OF THEIR POWERS.

IF THEY WISH TO SEEK THEIR *FORTUNE* IN THE *LARGER WORLD*, AND USE *MAGIC* TO DO SO, THEY SHOULD NOT FEAR *ASSASSINATION* IN THE *NIGHT*.

I THINK THE JUDICIOUS SUPERVISION OF THIS *COUNCIL* OUGHT TO *SUFFICE*.

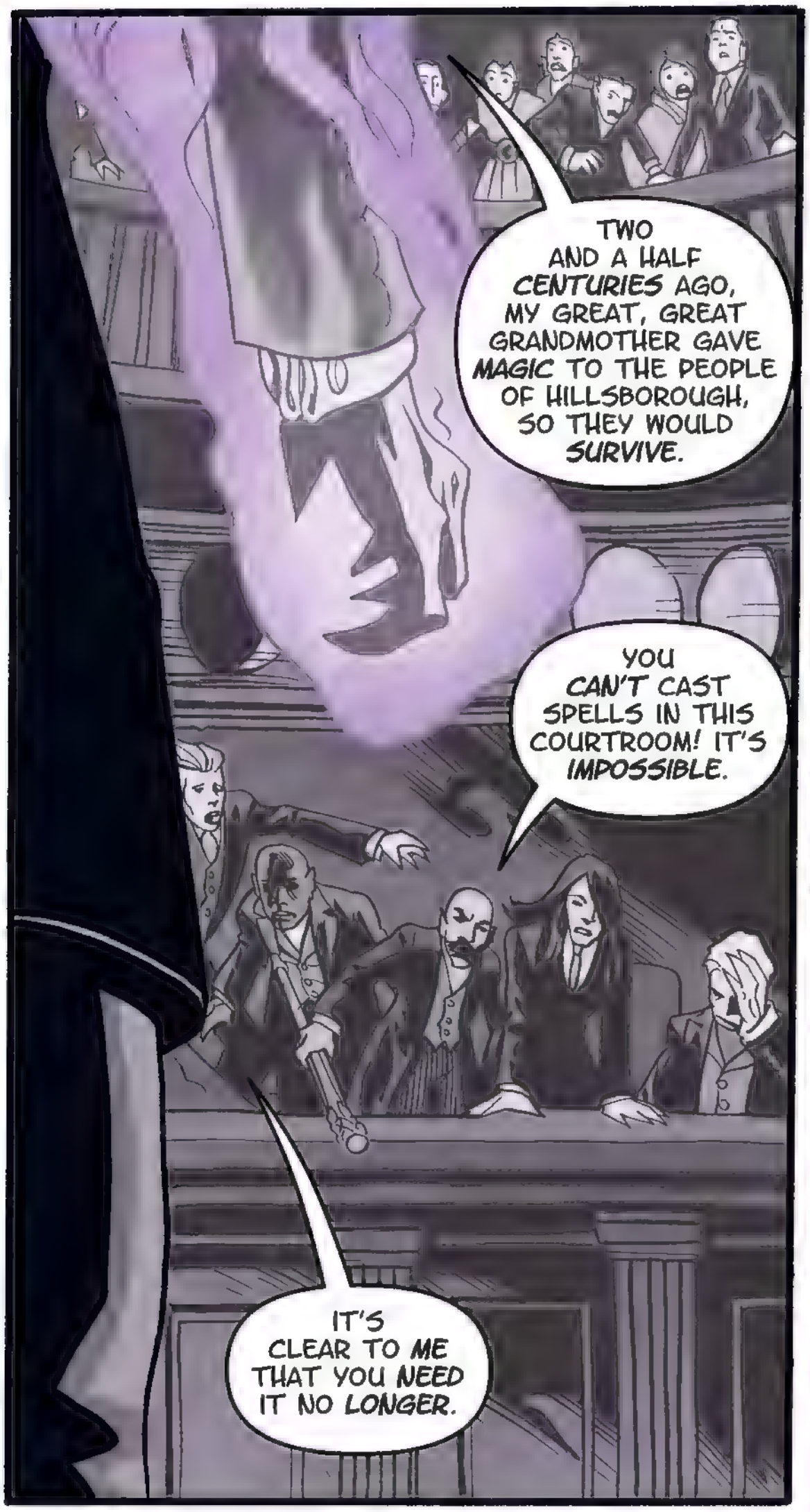
IT'S TIME FOR THE *COVEN OF MYSTICS* TO TAKE OUR RIGHTFUL *PLACE* IN SOCIETY.

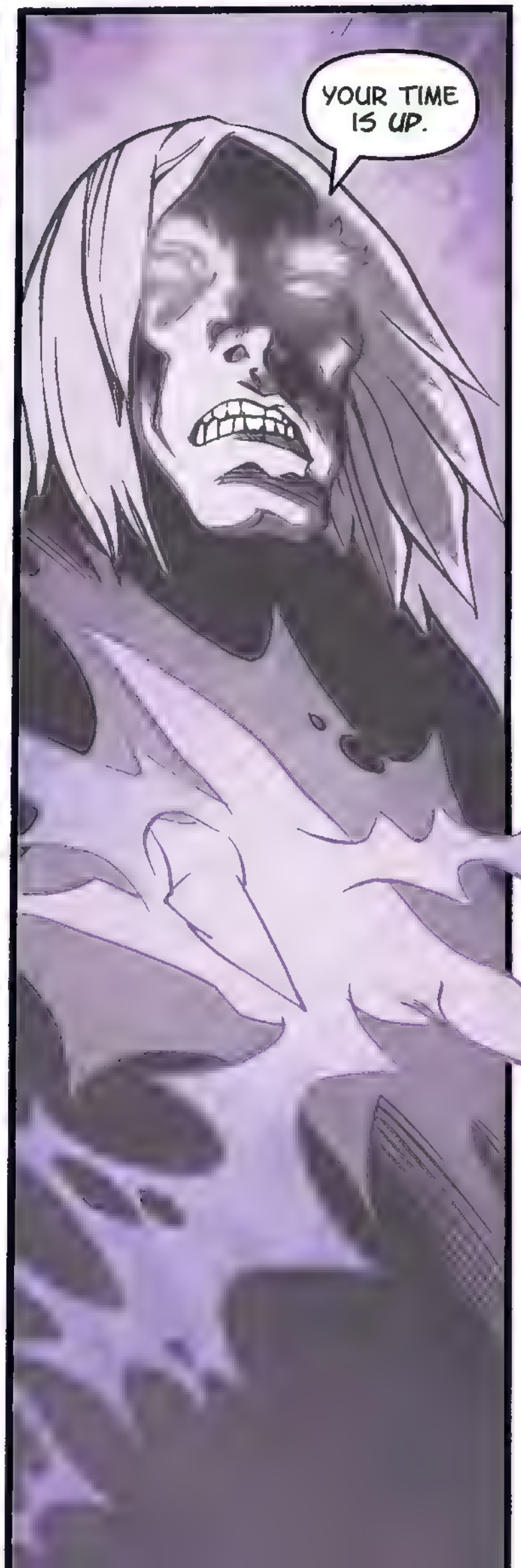
I *SEE*.

IT *SEEMS* THIS TRIAL WASN'T REALLY FOR *COURTNEY*. NOR WAS IT IN TRUTH, A TRIAL FOR *MYSELF*.

IT WAS A TRIAL FOR YOU ALL.

...AND I'M AFRAID YOU'VE ALL BEEN FOUND GUILTY.


TWO AND A HALF CENTURIES AGO, MY GREAT, GREAT GRANDMOTHER GAVE MAGIC TO THE PEOPLE OF HILLSBOROUGH, SO THEY WOULD SURVIVE.
YOU CAN'T CAST SPELLS IN THIS COURTROOM! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
IT'S CLEAR TO ME THAT YOU NEED IT NO LONGER.


YOUR TIME IS UP.

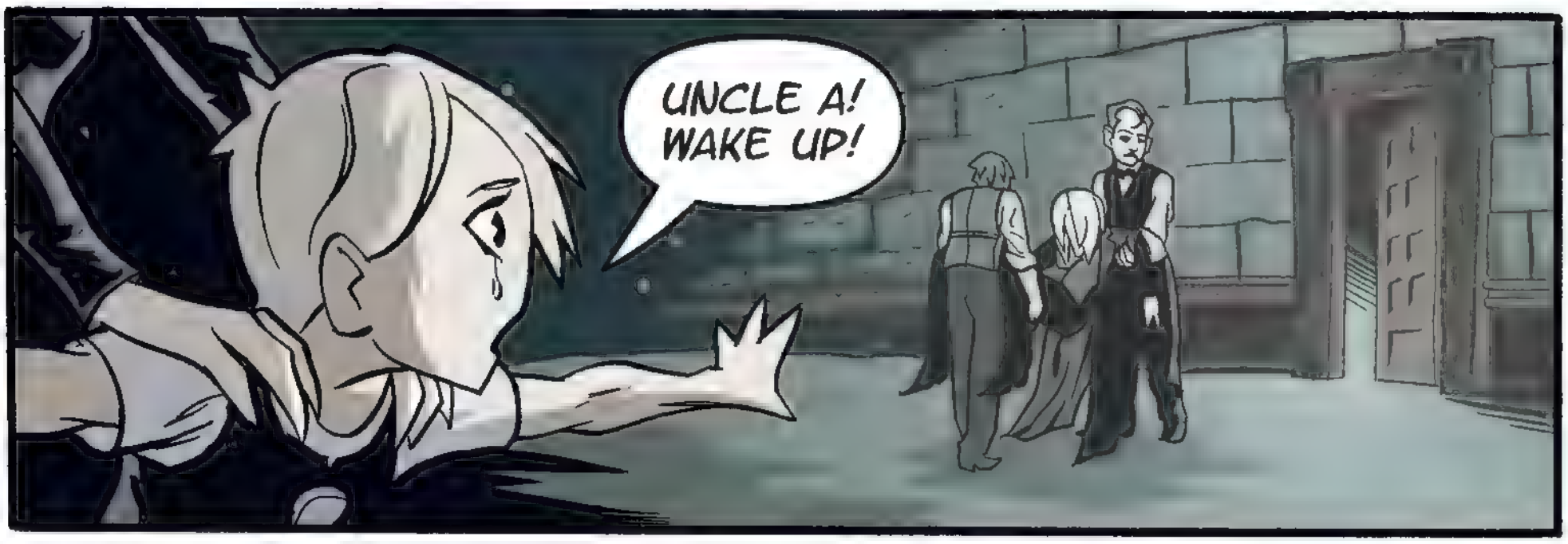
I'M SORRY TO SAY...

IT'S YOUR TIME THAT'S UP, OLD FRIEND.

CLICK

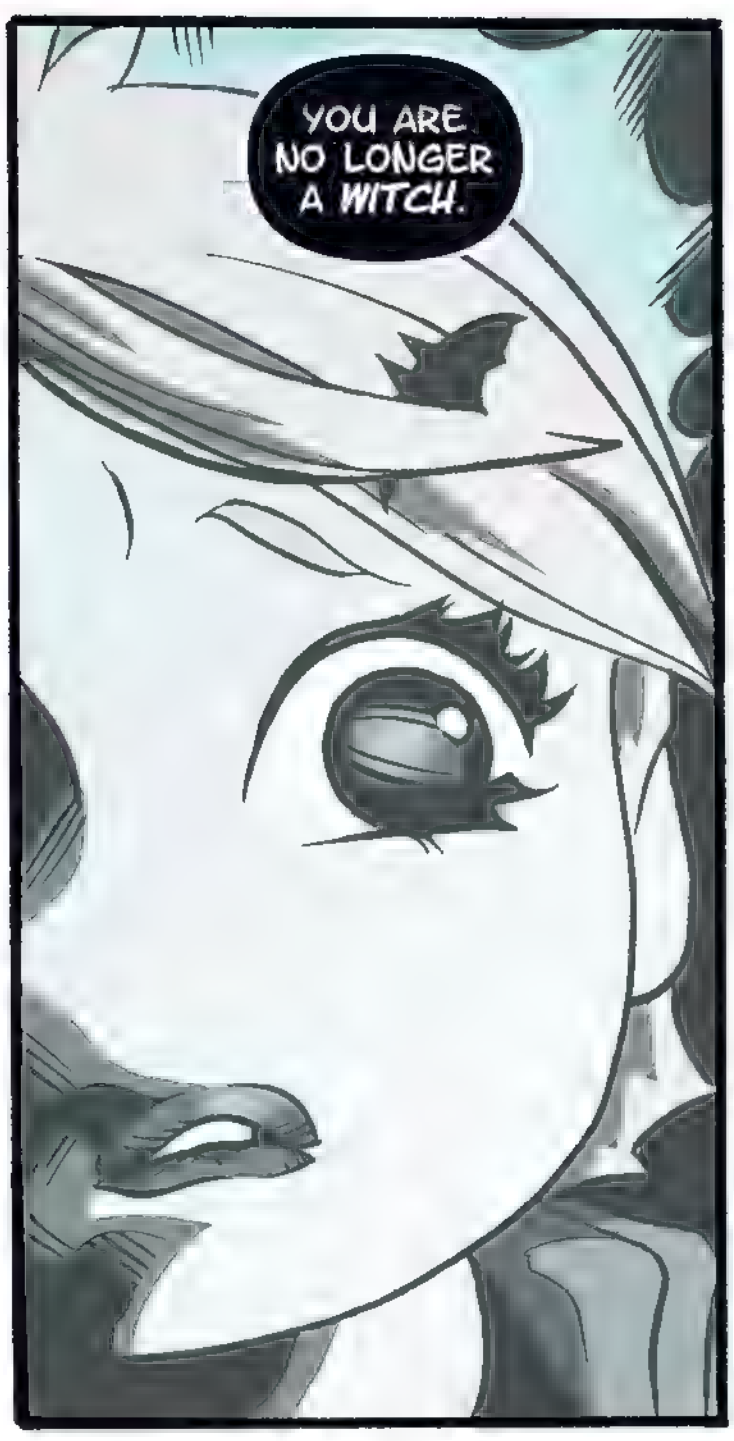
HRRKK!

NO!


UNCLE A! WAKE UP!

AHEM< IF THERE ARE NO MORE OUTBURSTS, WE WILL NOW PASS SENTENCE.
SLAM!

COURTNEY CRUMRIN!


YOU ARE NO LONGER A WITCH.

Chapter Five

RISE AND SHINE, LAZY BONES. IT'S *MONDAY*.

HAVE YOU EVER AWOKEN OUT OF A DEEP SLEEP AND FOUND YOURSELF IN A PLACE YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE, FORGETTING FOR A MOMENT HOW YOU GOT THERE? I KNOW I HAVE.

SOMETIMES, WHEN YOU REMEMBER AT LAST, IT'S A RELIEF.

I'M POURING YOUR CEREAL IN *FIVE MINUTES*. IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT *SOGGY*, YOU'D BETTER GET *UP*.

AND SOMETIMES IT'S NOT.

WELL, THEN. WE COULD THROW A DINNER PARTY *OURSELVES*.

SURE, *THAT* WOULD GO WELL.

WE INVITE *EVERYONE* IN *TOWN*. SURELY *SOMEONE* WILL SHOW UP.

AND SOMETIMES, THE FEELING OF DISORIENTATION JUST GOES ON AND ON.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE WORLD FELT DEEPLY UNFAMILIAR...

HEY, *CRUMRIN*. WE DON'T THINK IT'S *FAIR* YOU HAVE A WHOLE *TABLE* TO YOURSELF.

BUT COURTNEY COULDN'T PUT HER FINGER ON WHAT IT WAS.

HAVE A *SEAT*. I DON'T CARE.

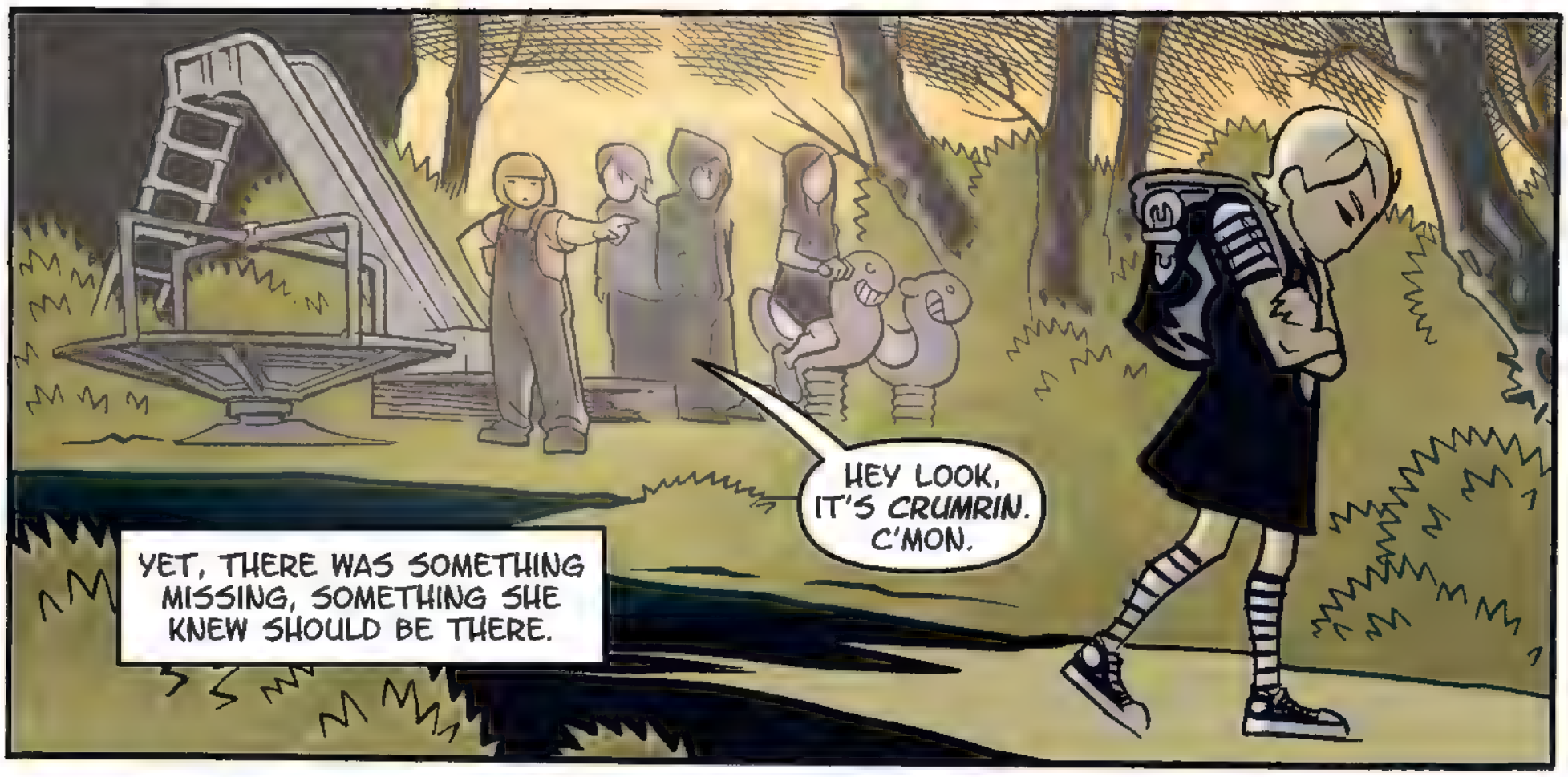
YEAH, *ABOUT* THAT...

WHAT THE *HELL* ARE YOU-

ARE YOU *TALKING*?

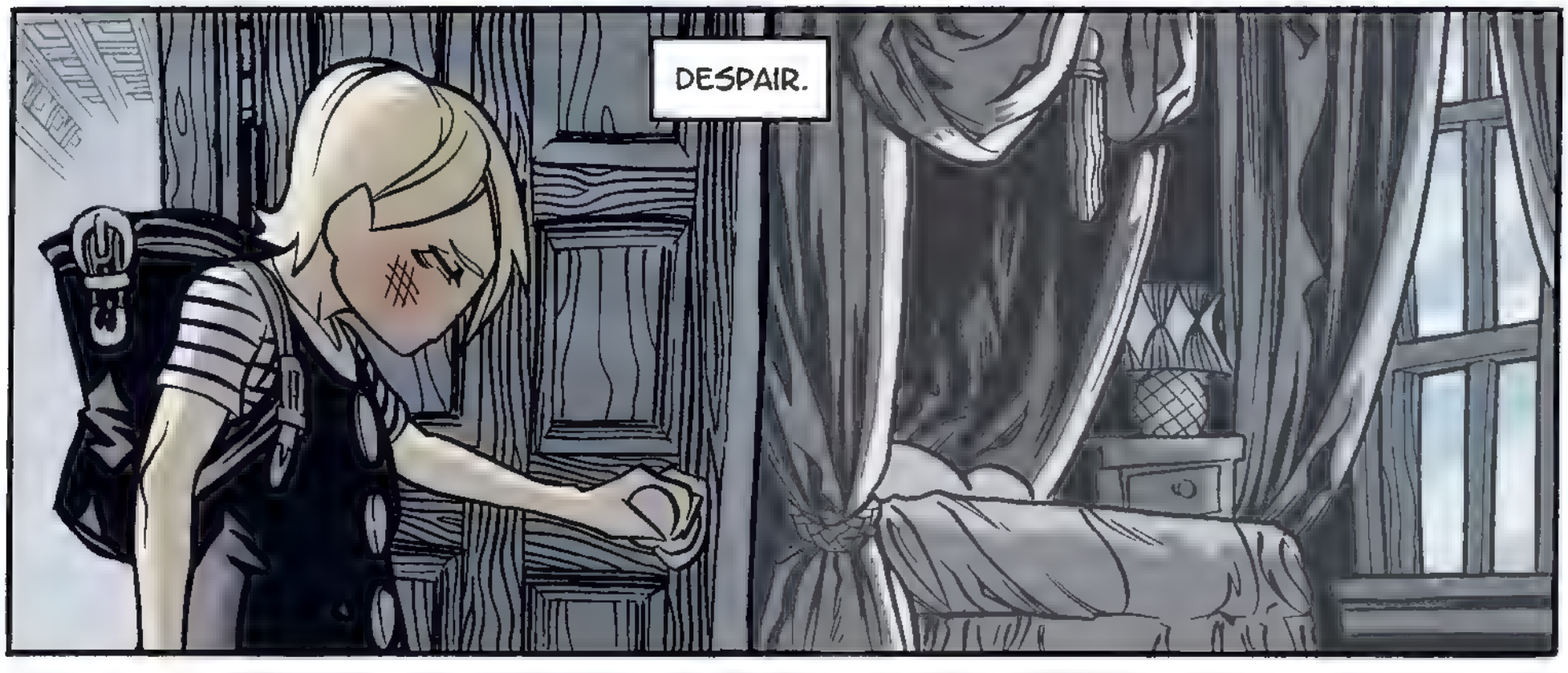
DIDN'T *THINK* SO.

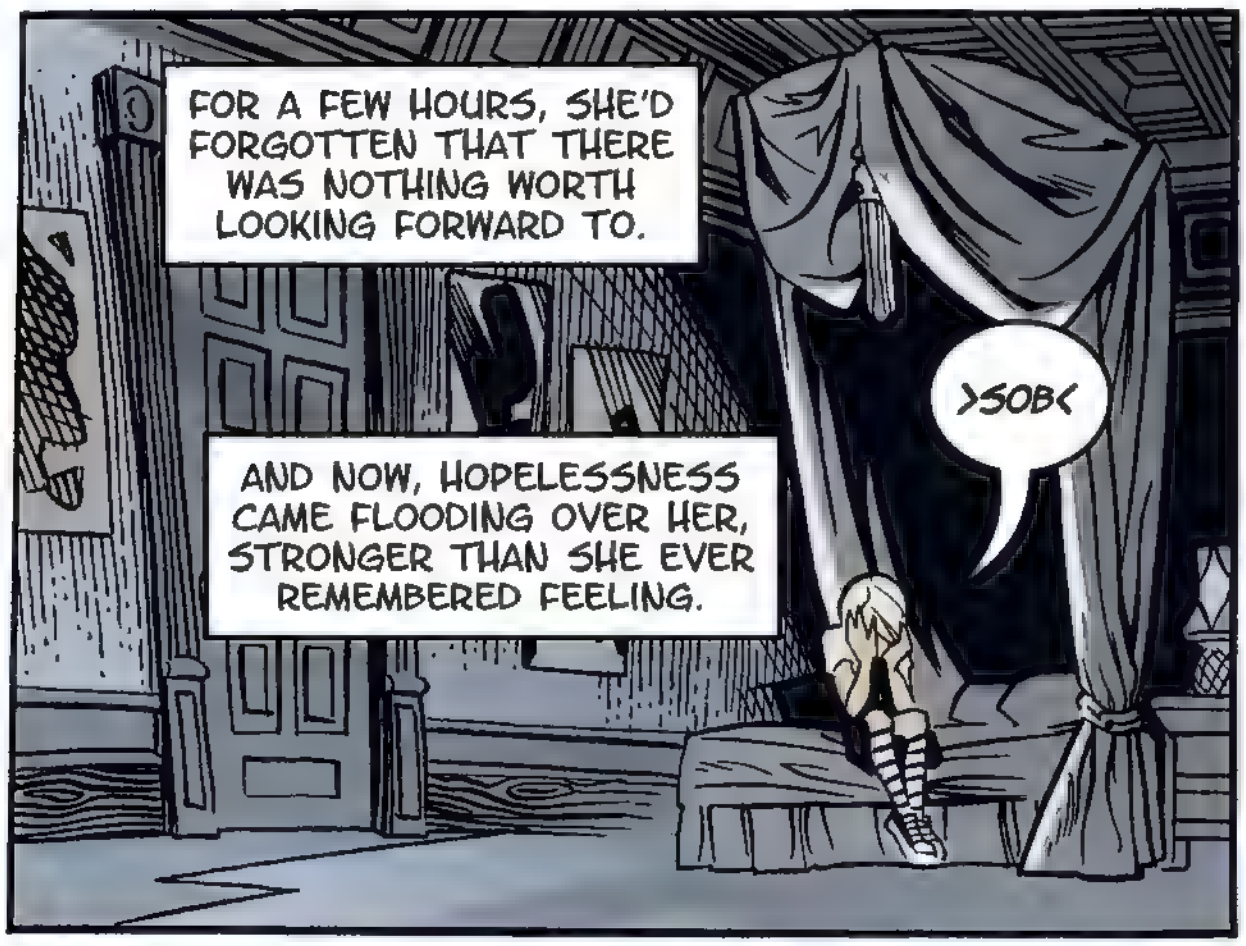
EVERYTHING WAS EXACTLY THE WAY IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN.


HEY LOOK, IT'S CRUMRIN. C'MON.
YET, THERE WAS SOMETHING MISSING, SOMETHING SHE KNEW SHOULD BE THERE.

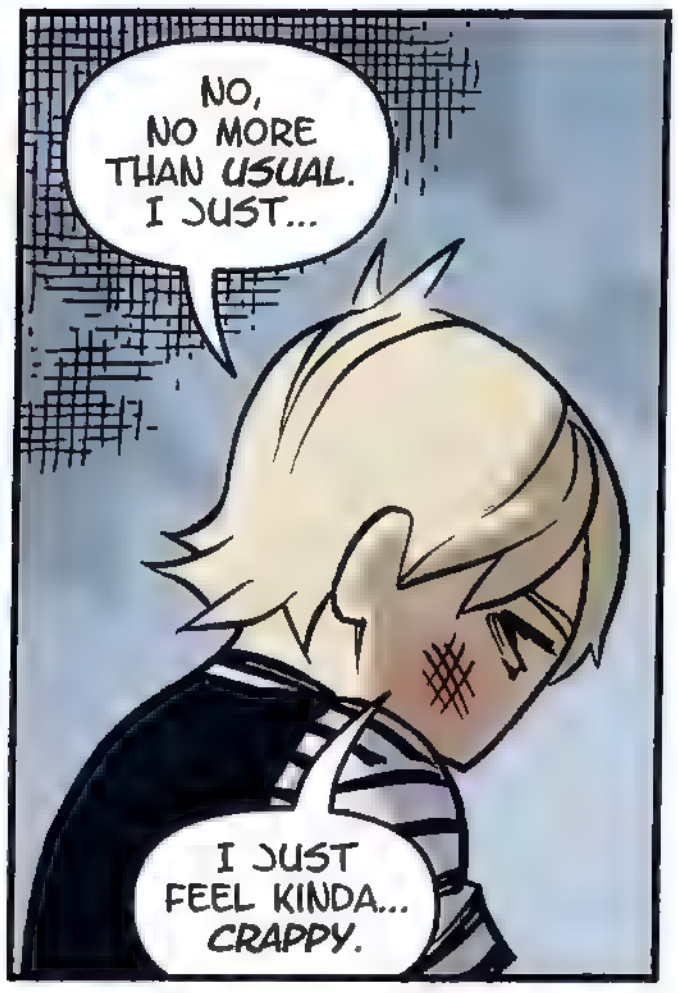
HEY, Q-TIP. YOU GOTTA PAY THE TOLL, REMEMBER?
Q-TIP, HAH! THAT NEVER GETS OLD, MAN.

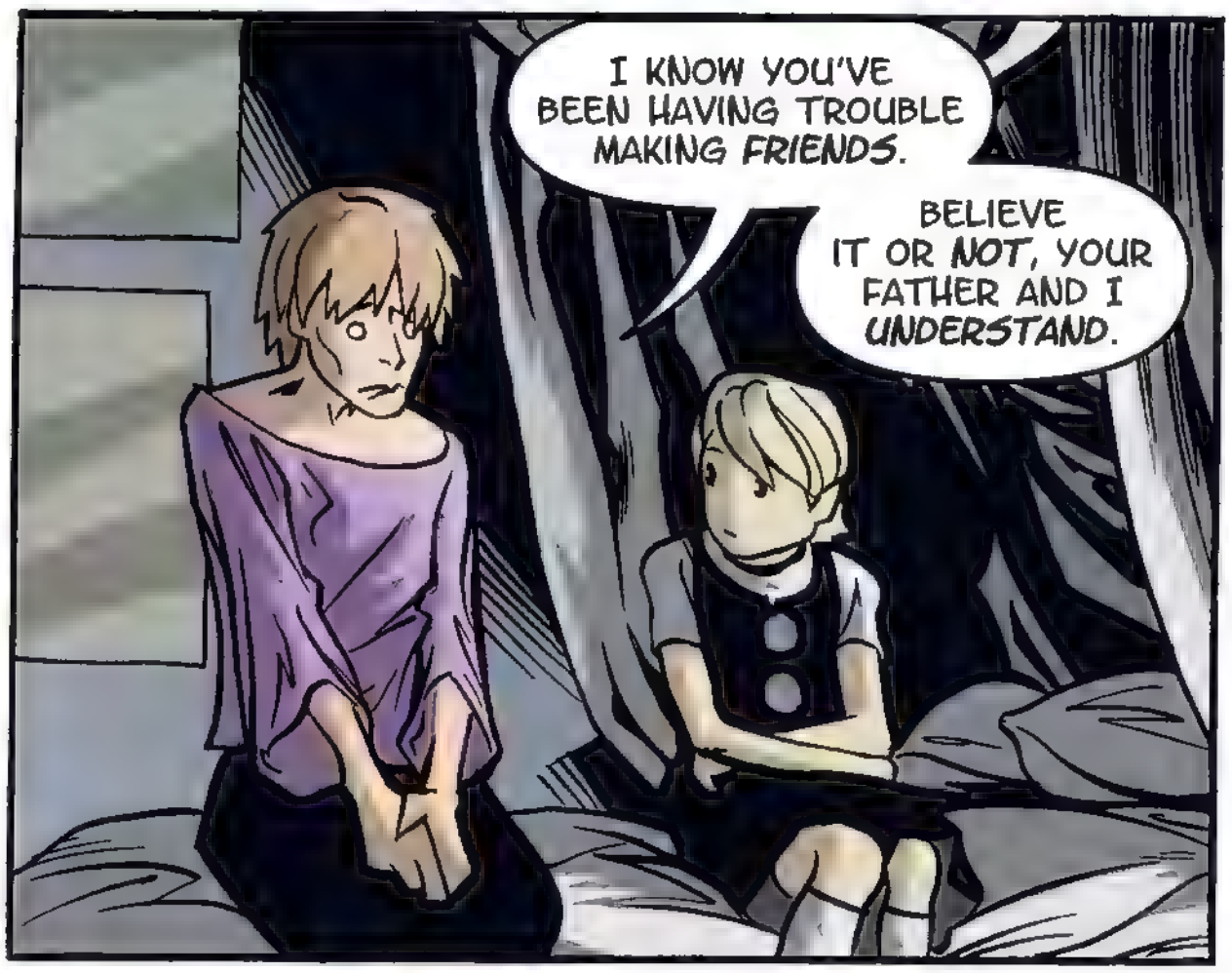
IT WASN'T TILL LATER THAT AFTERNOON THAT SHE REALIZED WHAT IT WAS.

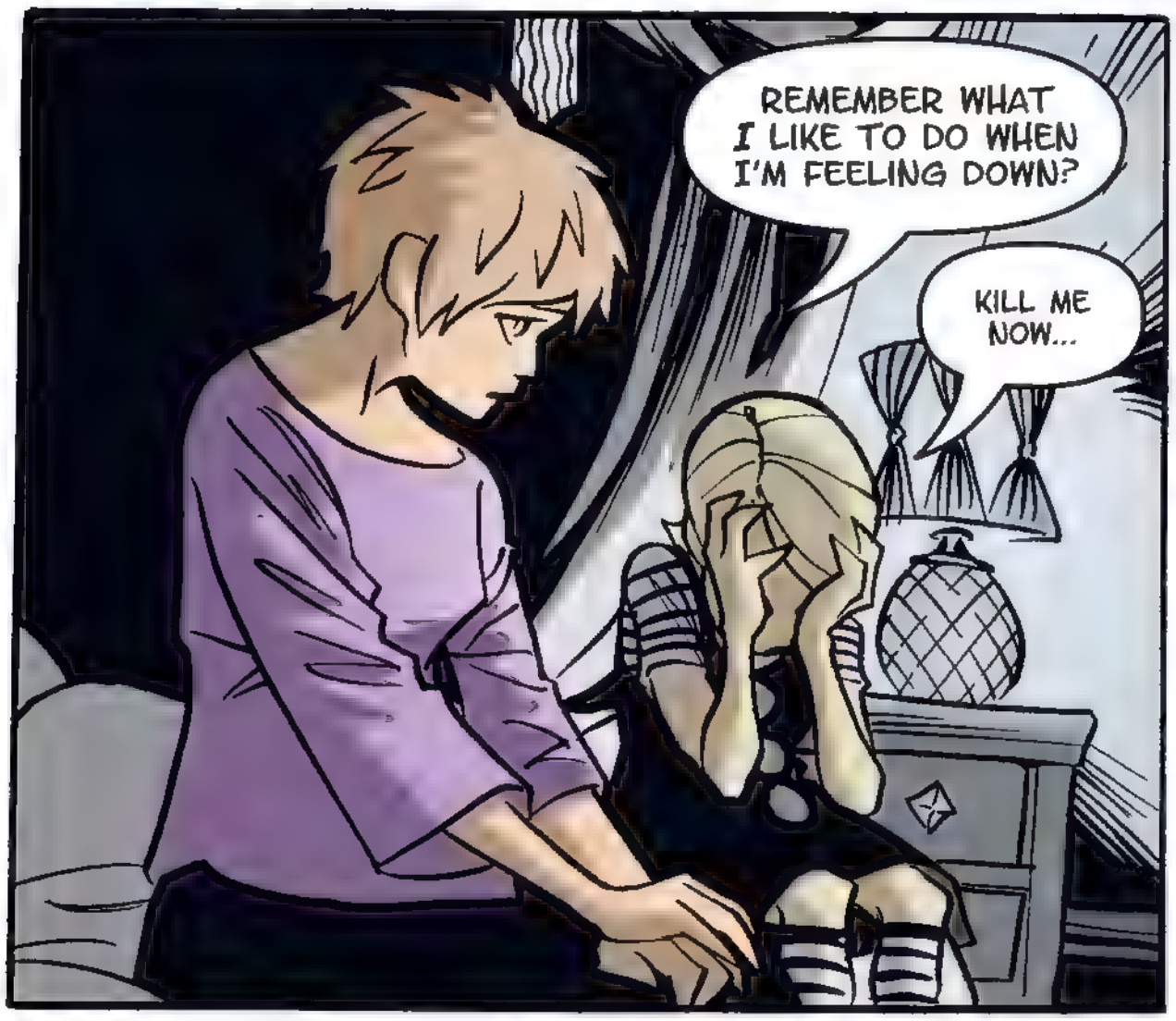

DESPAIR.


FOR A FEW HOURS, SHE'D FORGOTTEN THAT THERE WAS NOTHING WORTH LOOKING FORWARD TO.
AND NOW, HOPELESSNESS CAME FLOODING OVER HER, STRONGER THAN SHE EVER REMEMBERED FEELING.
>SOB<

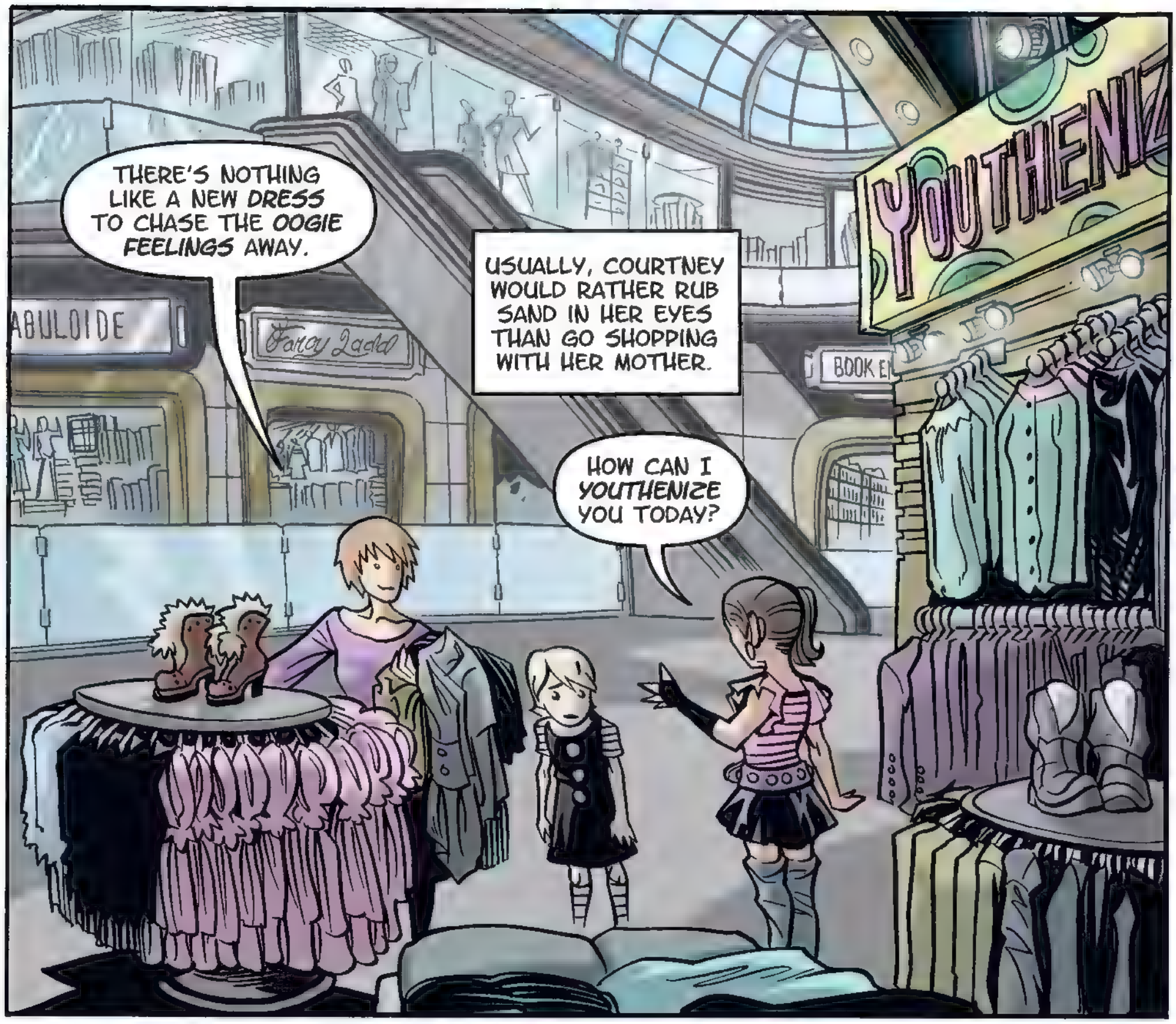
HONEY? ERR... YOU *OKAY*? DID SOMETHING *BAD* HAPPEN?

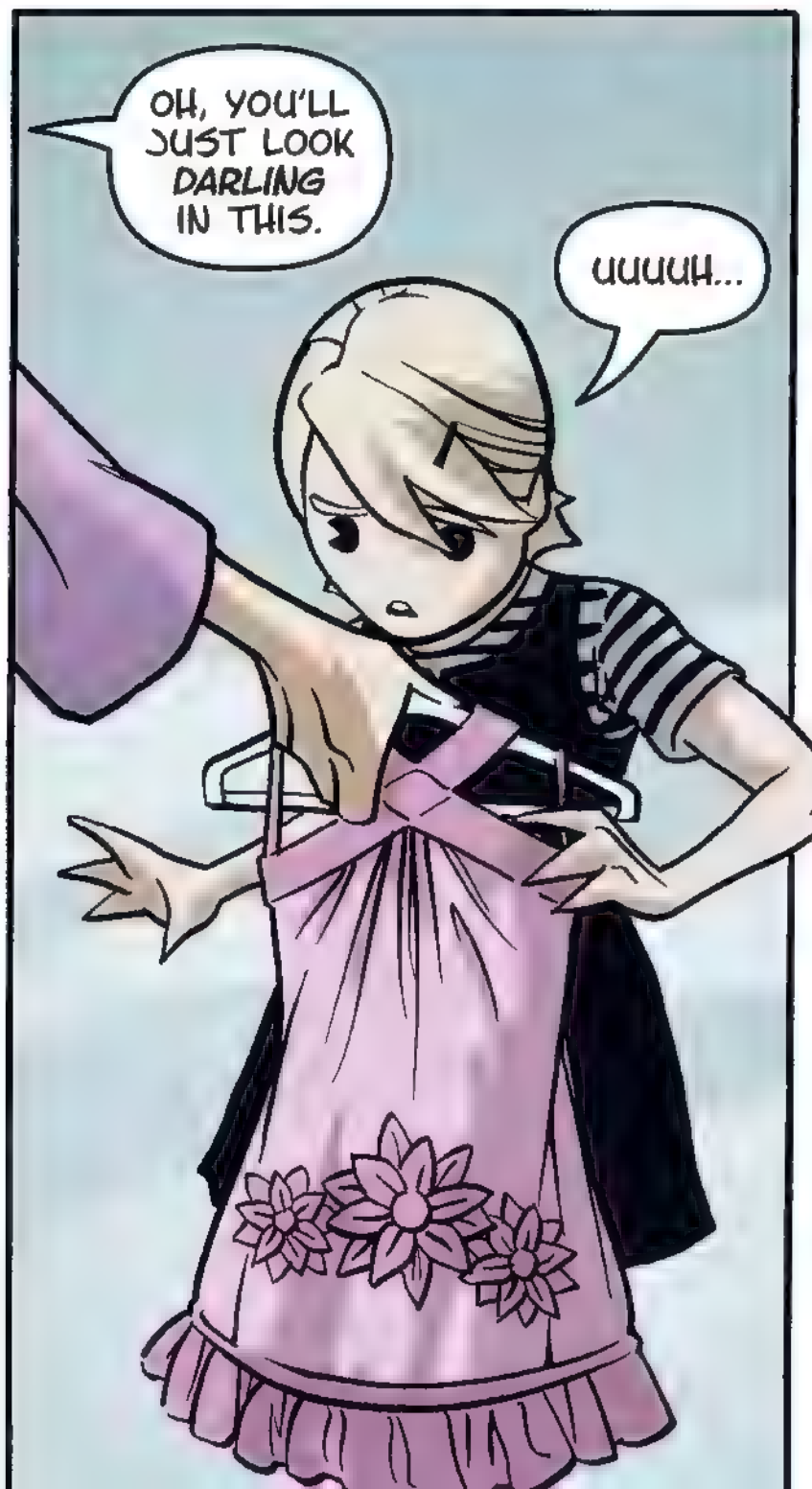

NO, NO MORE THAN *USUAL*. I JUST...
I JUST FEEL KINDA... *CRAPPY*.

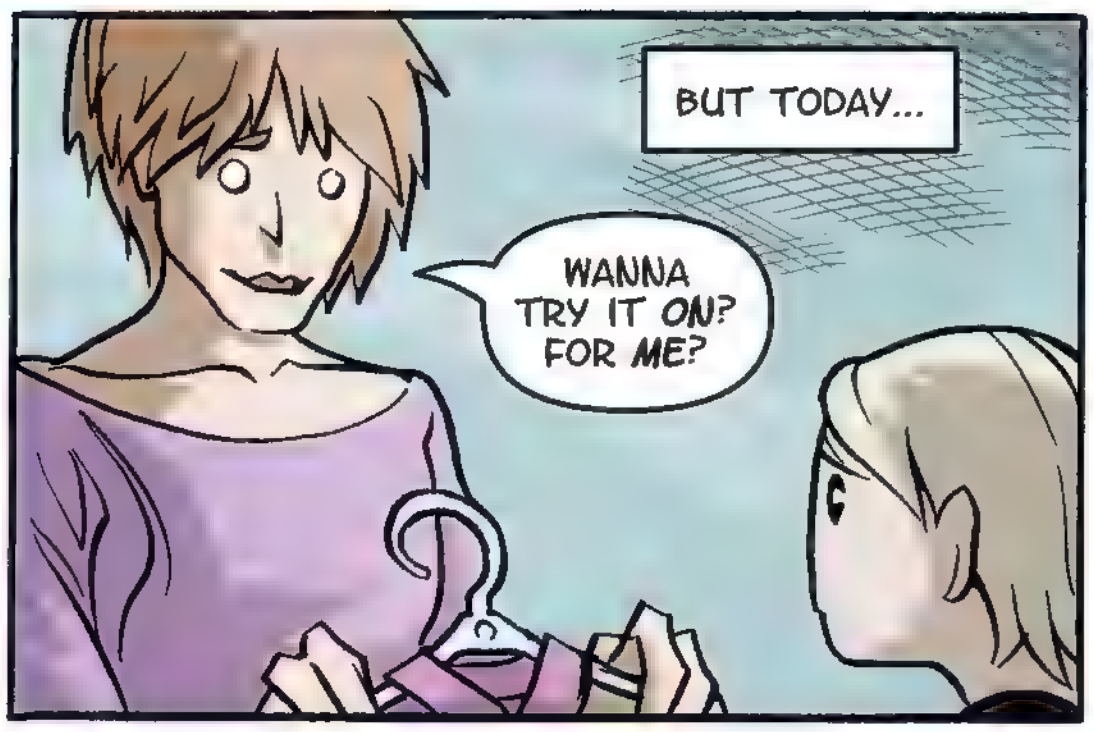

I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN HAVING TROUBLE MAKING *FRIENDS*.
BELIEVE IT OR *NOT*, YOUR FATHER AND I *UNDERSTAND*.

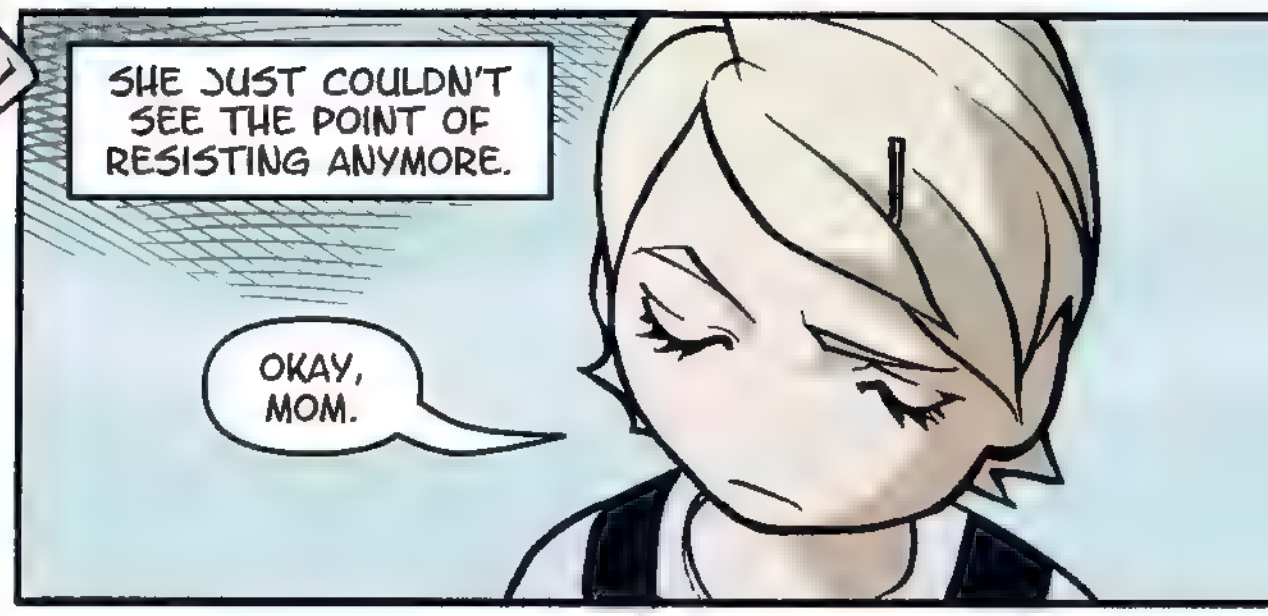

REMEMBER WHAT *I* LIKE TO DO WHEN I'M FEELING DOWN?
KILL ME NOW...

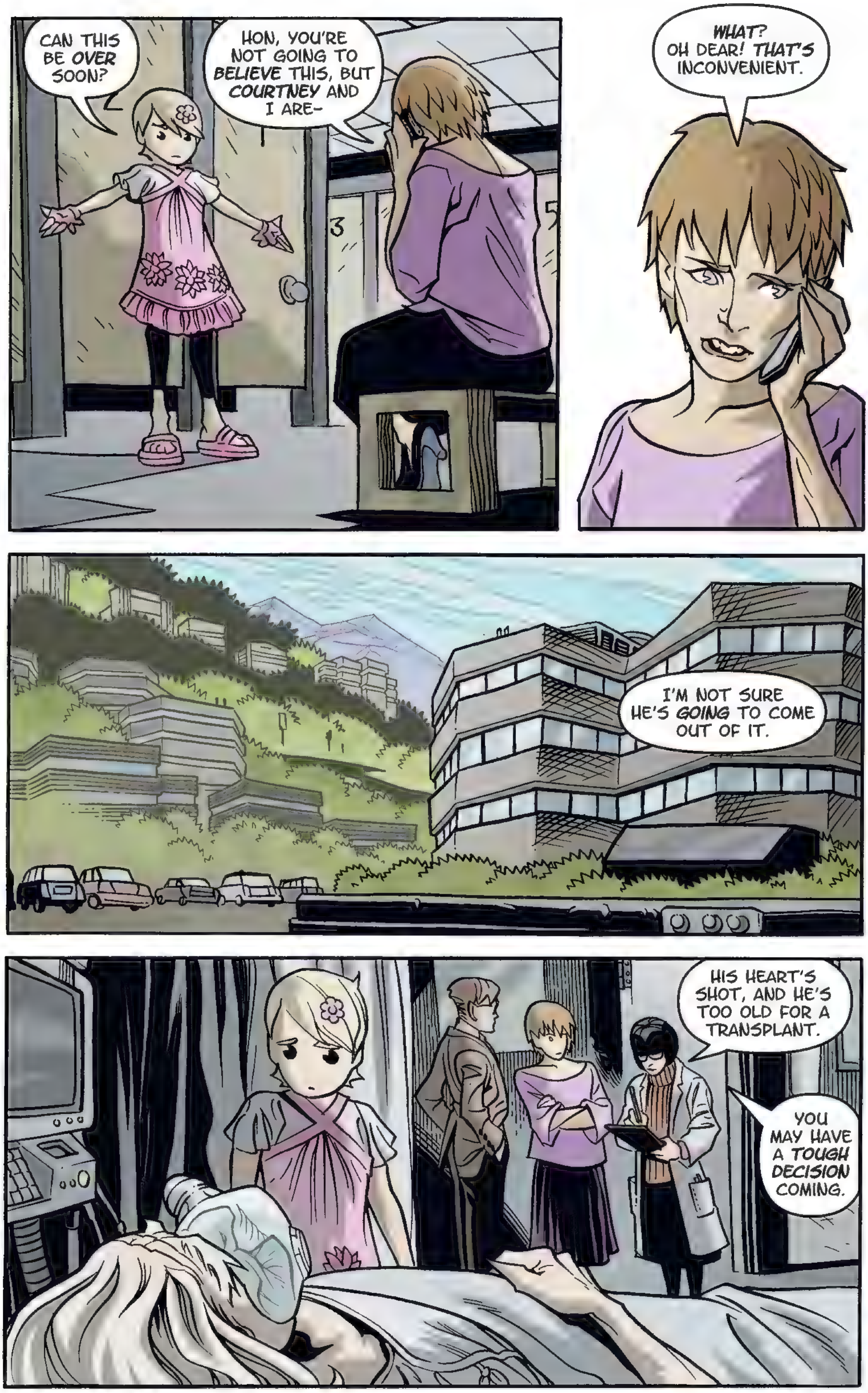
STANDING OFFER...

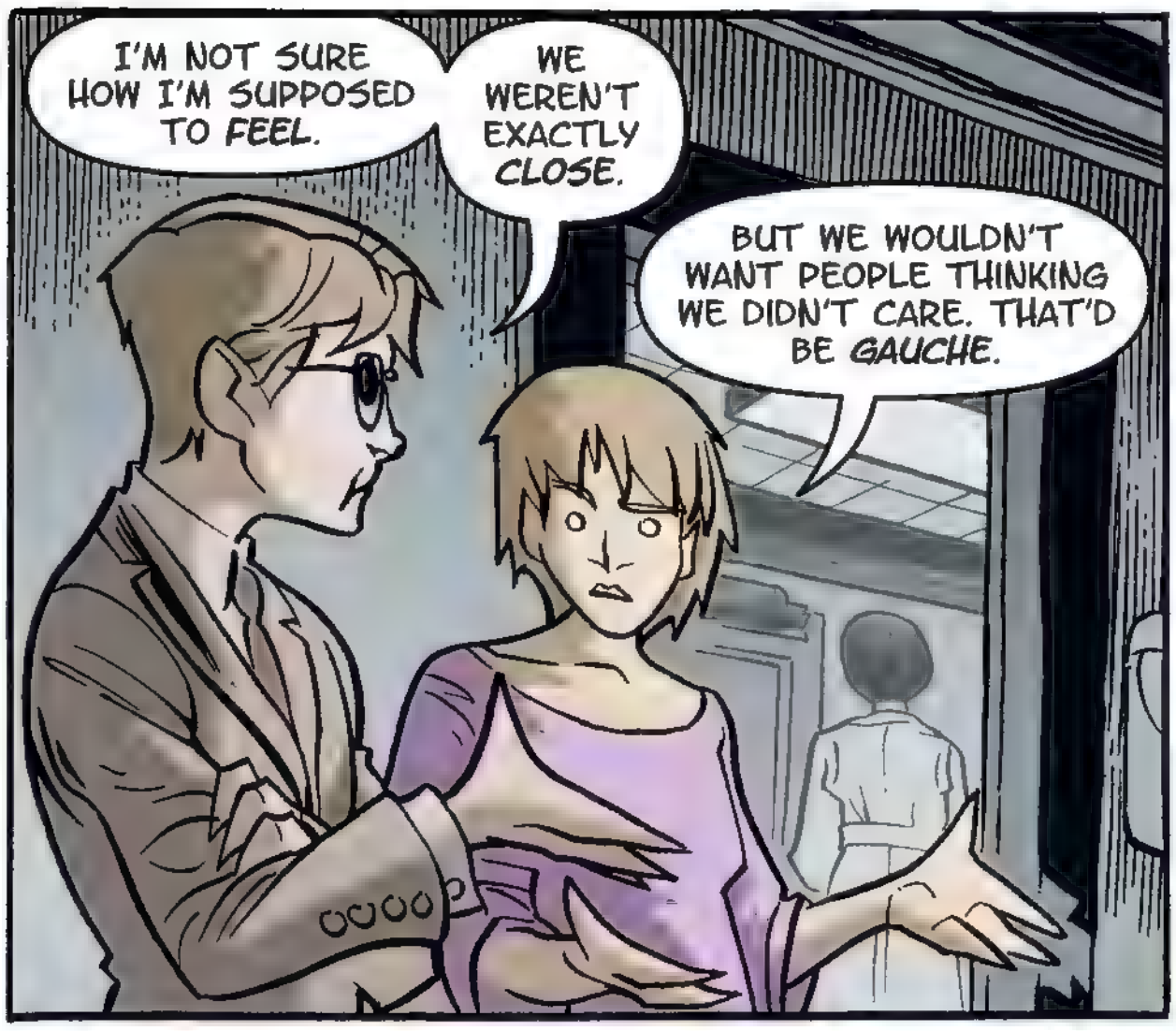

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A NEW DRESS TO CHASE THE OOGIE FEELINGS AWAY.
USUALLY, COURTNEY WOULD RATHER RUB SAND IN HER EYES THAN GO SHOPPING WITH HER MOTHER.
HOW CAN I YOUTHENIZE YOU TODAY?
YOUTHENIZ
ABULOIDE
Fancy Lads
BOOK E


OH, YOU'LL JUST LOOK DARLING IN THIS.
UUUUH...


BUT TODAY...
WANNA TRY IT ON? FOR ME?

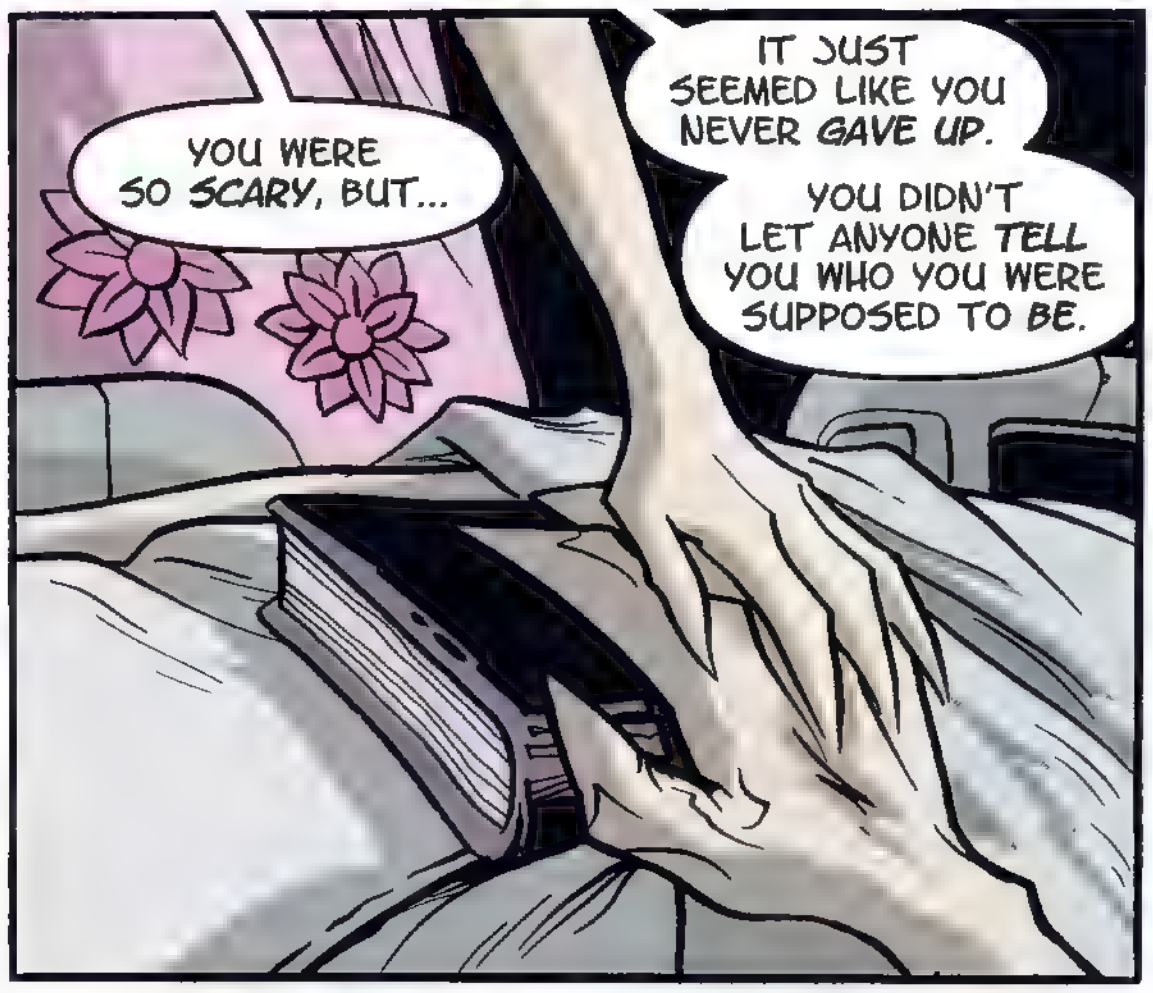

SHE JUST COULDN'T SEE THE POINT OF RESISTING ANYMORE.
OKAY, MOM.


CAN THIS BE OVER SOON?
HON, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS, BUT COURTNEY AND I ARE-
WHAT? OH DEAR! THAT'S INCONVENIENT.
I'M NOT SURE HE'S GOING TO COME OUT OF IT.
HIS HEART'S SHOT, AND HE'S TOO OLD FOR A TRANSPLANT.
YOU MAY HAVE A TOUGH DECISION COMING.


I'M NOT SURE HOW I'M SUPPOSED TO FEEL.
WE WEREN'T EXACTLY CLOSE.
BUT WE WOULDN'T WANT PEOPLE THINKING WE DIDN'T CARE. THAT'D BE GAUCHE.

ISN'T THERE A CAPPUCCINO'S DOWNSTAIRS?
YOU READ MY MIND.

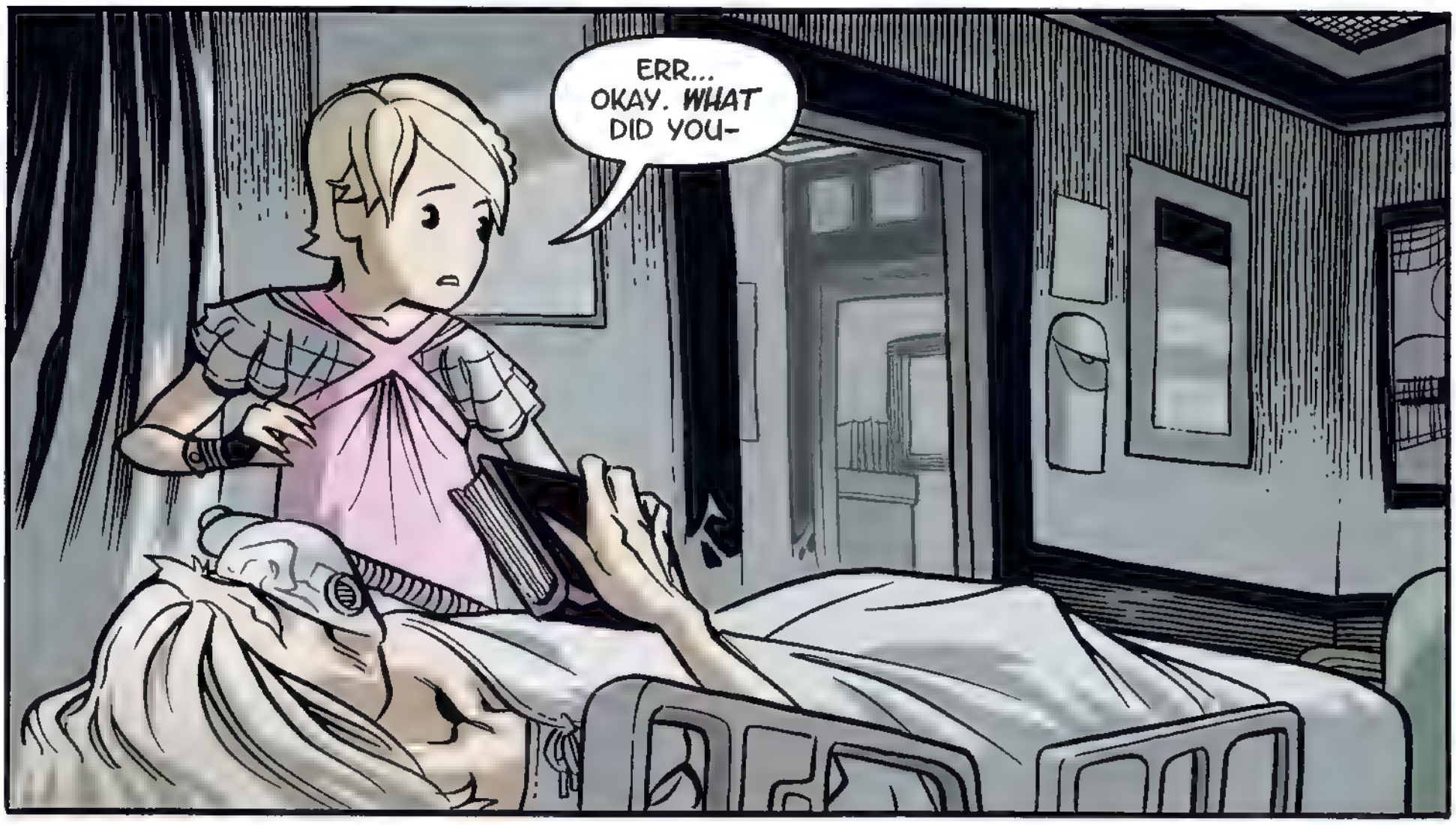
I DON'T KNOW WHY I KEEP CRYING. IT'S SO STUPID. I JUST...
I WISH I KNEW YOU BETTER.


YOU WERE SO SCARY, BUT...
IT JUST SEEMED LIKE YOU NEVER GAVE UP.
YOU DIDN'T LET ANYONE TELL YOU WHO YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE.

I WISH I COULD BE THAT STRONG.
COURT... NEY...

UNCLE A? SHOULD I GET A DOCTOR?
NO. R-RUH...

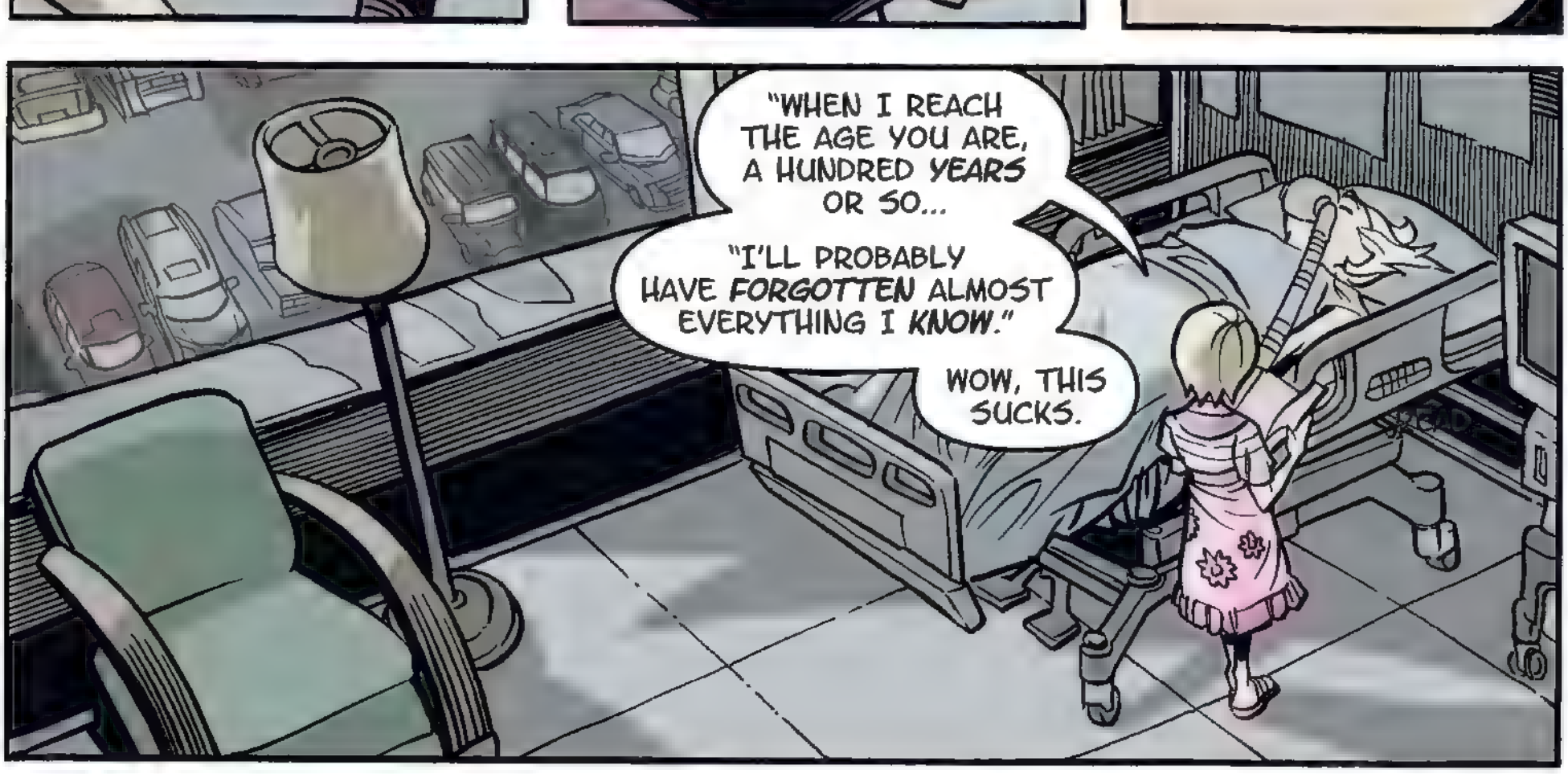
READ...
TO...
ME...


ERR... OKAY. WHAT DID YOU-

WHAT THE... ?
Courtney's Diary
Don't even THINK about it!!!

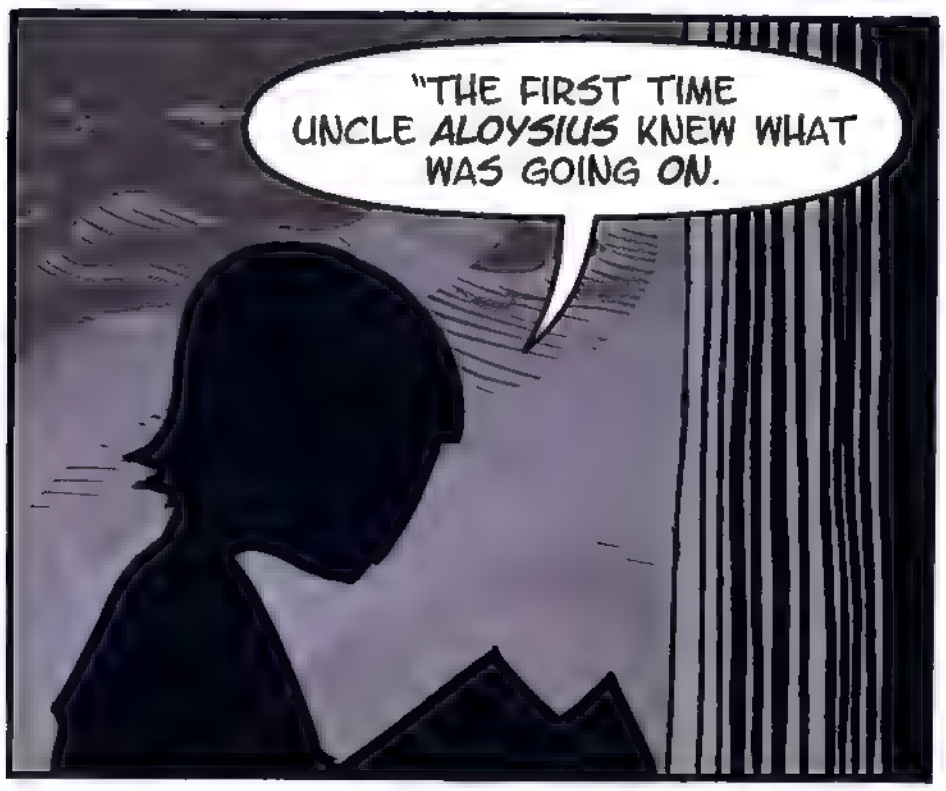
WHEN DID I WRITE THIS?
...READ...

"I WILL REMEMBER."


"WHEN I REACH THE AGE YOU ARE, A HUNDRED YEARS OR SO...
"I'LL PROBABLY HAVE FORGOTTEN ALMOST EVERYTHING I KNOW."
WOW, THIS SUCKS.

I will Remember
"I WON'T REMEMBER *ANYONE* WITH WHOM I WENT TO *SCHOOL*, OR THE *TV SHOWS* AND *WEBSITES* THEY INSISTED WERE SO *COOL*.

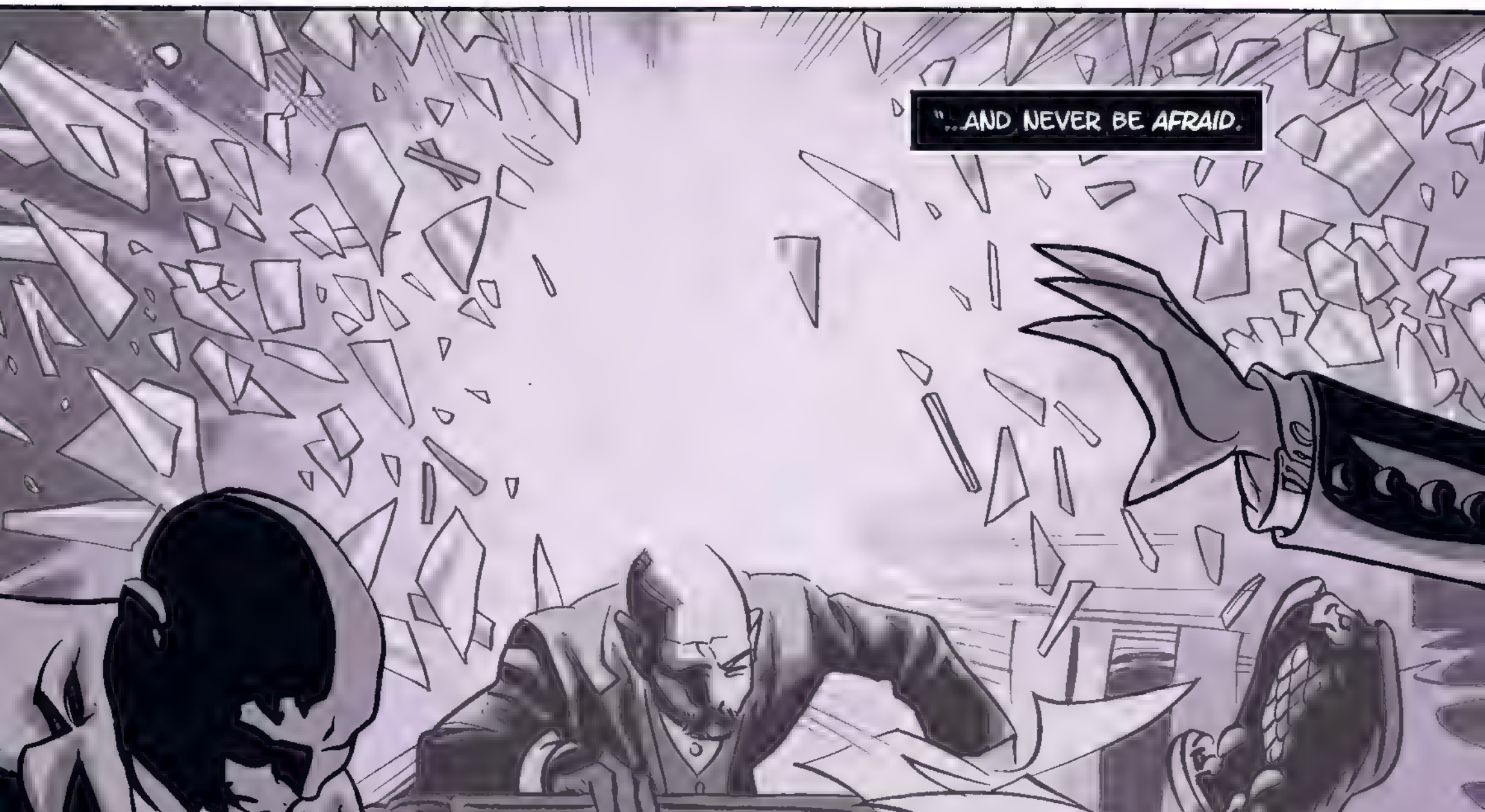
"BUT THERE'S *ONE* THING I'LL REMEMBER *WELL*, WHEN EVERYTHING ELSE IS *GONE*...


"THE FIRST TIME UNCLE *ALOYSIUS* KNEW WHAT WAS GOING *ON*.

"WHEN I WAS LOST BEYOND *ESCAPE* AND THOUGHT THAT NO ONE *CARED*, UNCLE A WAS *WAITING* THERE, MAGIC SPELLS *PREPARED*.

"HE TAUGHT ME HOW TO SUMMON *FIRE* AND *DARKNESS* TO MY AID."

SO WE NEED TO DECIDE IF WE SHOULD SEND A DELEGATE TO THE CAPITAL.
WHAT'S THAT RACKET? IS THAT THE WIND?
"HE TAUGHT ME HOW TO FACE THE WORLD...


"...AND NEVER BE AFRAID.

"WITH HIM I SHARED SOMETHING THAT I HAD NEVER KNOWN."

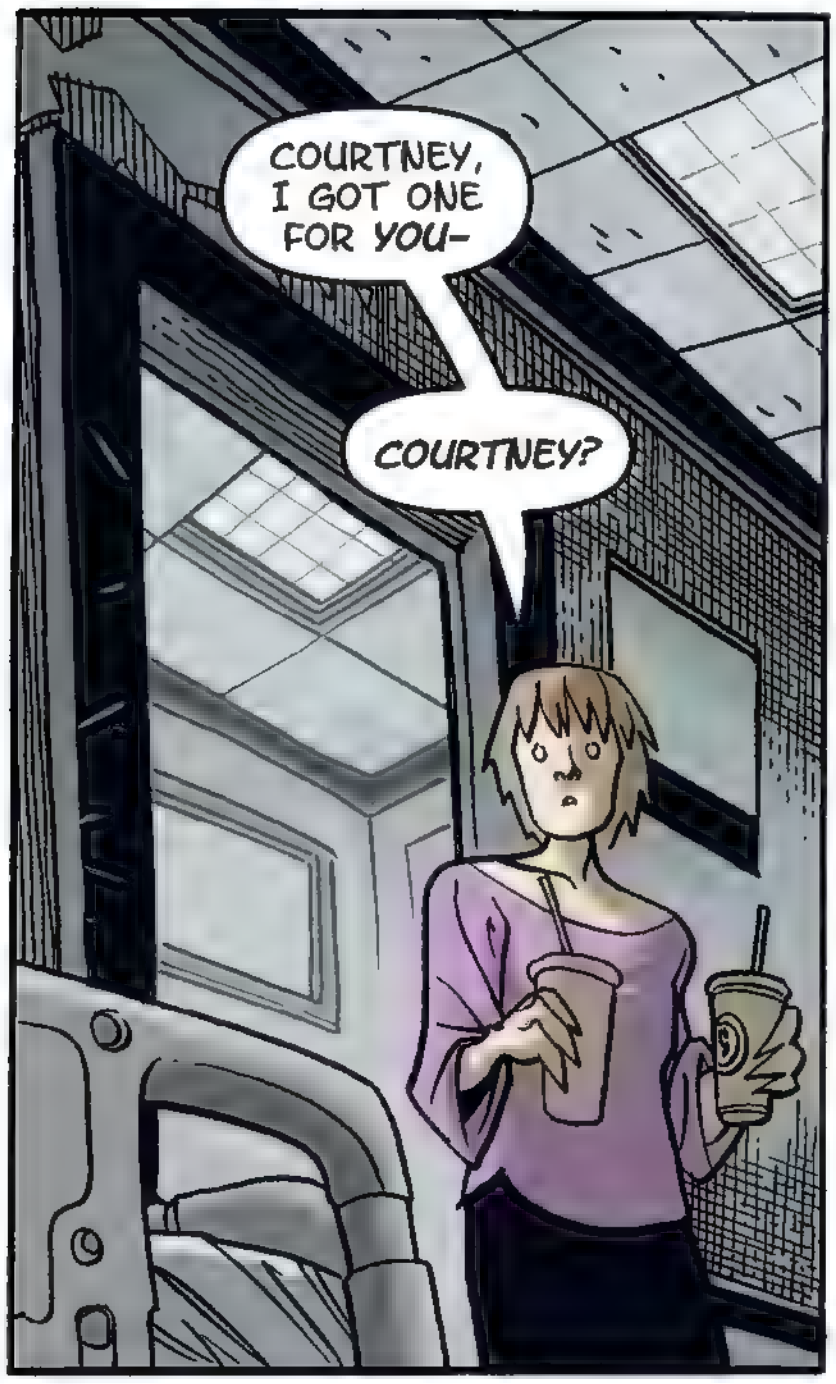
"AND SO LONG AS I REMEMBER HIM...

"...I'LL NEVER BE ALONE."

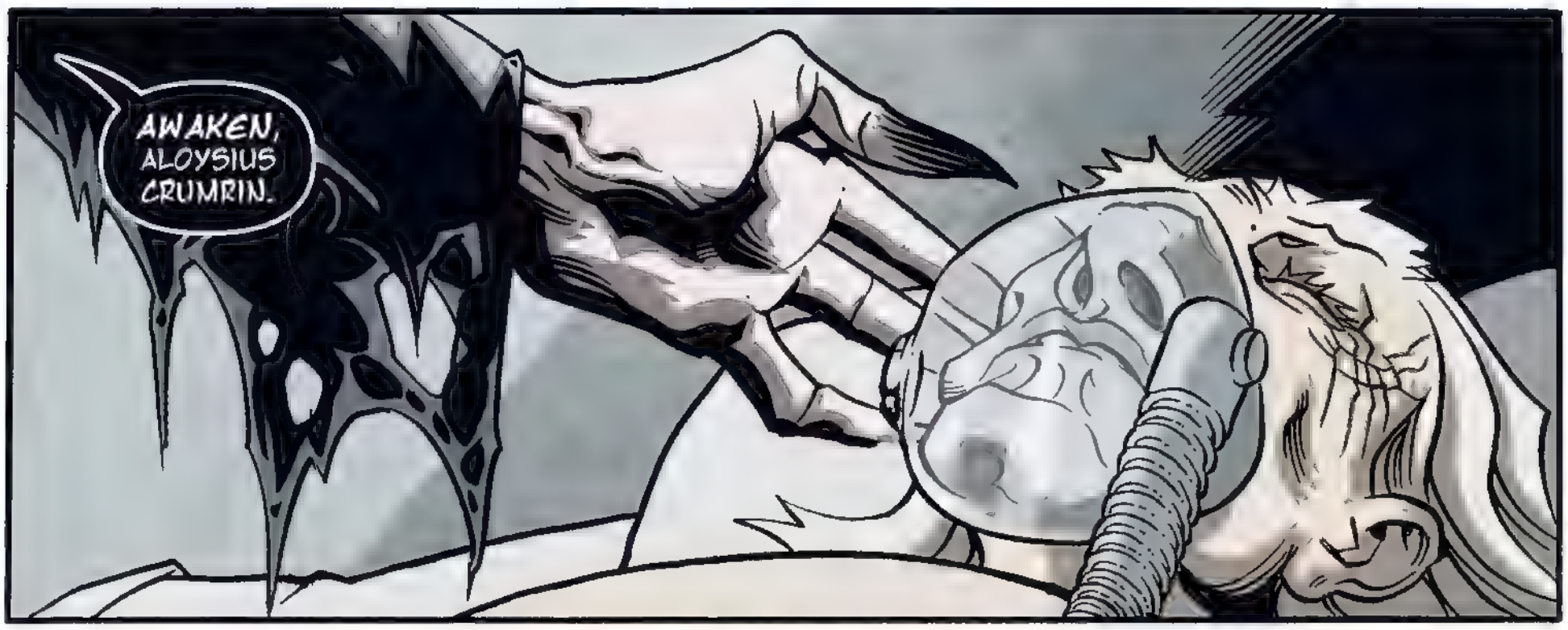
GOBLIN, GET THIS MESS CLEANED UP.
I SUPPOSE YOU REALIZE THIS IS NO ORDINARY STORM, STOCKBROOK.

ARE YOU SAYING IT WAS CRUMRIN? HE'S IN A COMA.
HAH, SUCH POWER WAS BEYOND THE REACH OF ALOYSIUS IN HIS PRIME.

THEN WHO?

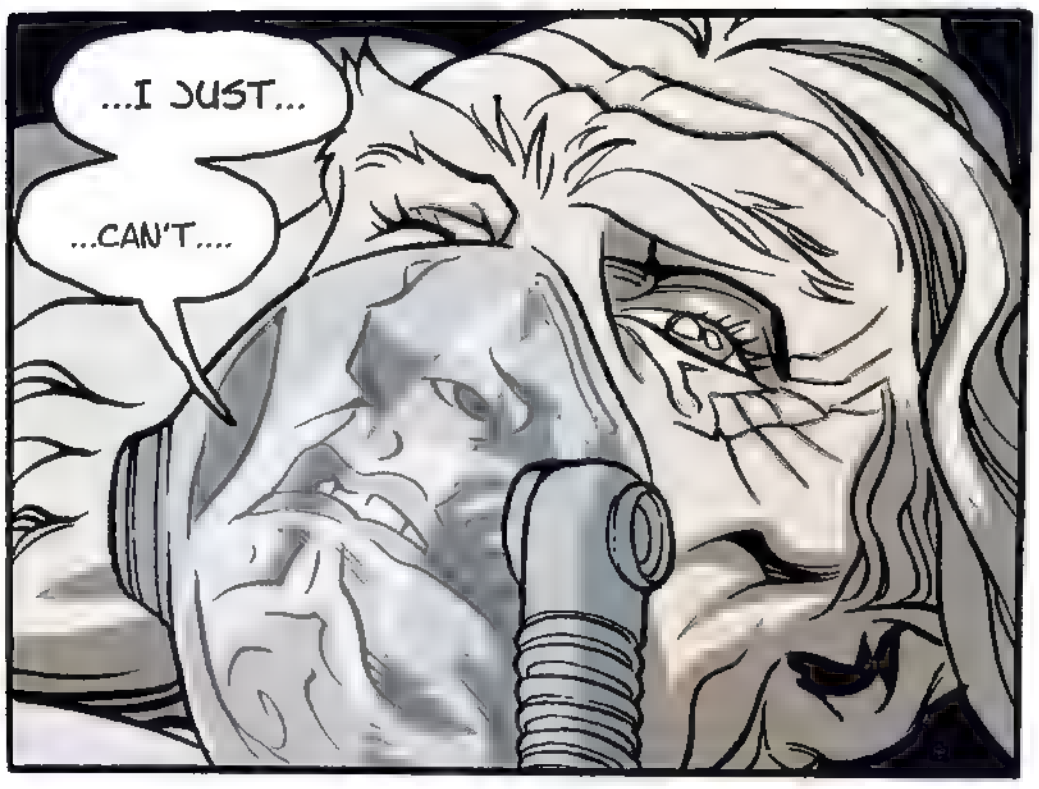

COURTNEY, I GOT ONE FOR YOU-
COURTNEY?

HONEY, SHE'S DISAPPEARED AGAIN.


AWAKEN, ALOYSIUS CRUMRIN.

WASN'T...
ASLEEP...

YOUR NIECE NEEDS YOU ONE LAST TIME, MORTAL.
I...
KNOW...


...I JUST...
...CAN'T....

I HAVE A NEW BARGAIN FOR YOU.
IF YOU'RE INTERESTED.

GOOD HEAVENS, LOOK AT THIS PLACE.
WHAT ON EARTH IS HAPPENING? ARE WE UNDER ATTACK?
WE WANT ANSWERS!
CALM DOWN, PEOPLE. EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL.

WE'RE GOING TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS-

ISN'T THAT THE *CRUMRIN* GIRL!

WHAT'S *SHE* DOING HERE?

MISS *CRUMRIN*? IS THAT *YOU*?

DO YOU... *KNOW* WHERE YOU *ARE*?

DO YOU KNOW *ME*?

I KNOW YOU *ALL*.

YOU'RE SPOILED *CHILDREN*, NOT SATISFIED WITH HAVING EVERYTHING YOU *NEED*, *GRABBING* AT WHAT DOESN'T *BELONG* TO YOU.

WHO ARE YOU CALLING *CHILDREN*, KID?

YOU'RE WICKED WITCHES.
IS SHE CAUSING THE STORM? IMPOSSIBLE!
HOW ON EARTH DID YOU GET YOUR MEMORIES BACK?
THAT SPELL IS IRREVERSIBLE.
NO ONE KNOWS WHAT MYSTERY AND POWER LIES WITHIN THE HEART OF A WITCH.
DO THEY?
I WAS JUST WRITING A POEM ABOUT IT. DO YOU WANT TO HEAR IT?

INSIDE MY HEART, THERE'S A CREAKY OLD *HOUSE* FULL OF SHADOWS THAT *WATCH* AS YOU PASS BY.

WHAT'S SHE *SAYING*?

WAIT! DID YOU *FEEL* THAT?

THE *GROUND*! IT'S *SHAKING*!

INSIDE MY HEART, THERE'S A TANGLED *FOREST* FULL OF SECRETS BEST LEFT *ALONE*.

RUN!

INSIDE MY HEART, THERE ARE DARK *TUNNELS* THAT GO ON *FOREVER*.

INSIDE MY HEART, A *MOTHER* WITH NO *CHILDREN*. INSIDE MY HEART, A *KING* WITH NO *HOPE*.

THIS CAN'T BE!

A KINGDOM WITH NO SUNRISE. A WOUND WITH NO HEALING.
STOP! STOP READING!

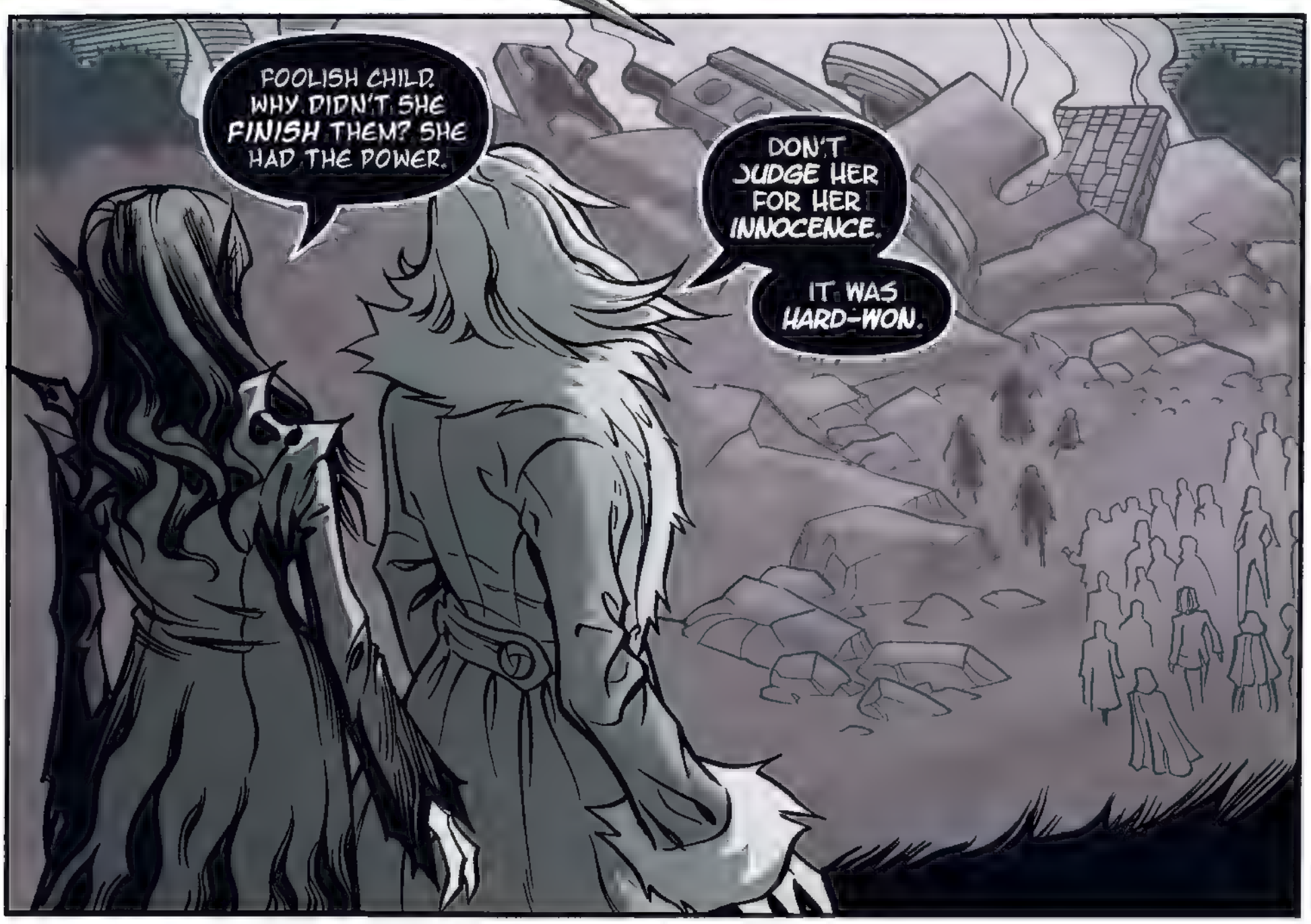
SCORCHED EARTH.

WHERE'S STOCKBROOK?

>COUGH<
HELP ME!
>COUGH<
>COUGH<

ARREST HER!
DON'T BOTHER. >COUGH<

THIS IS WHAT WE DO TO WITCHES GONE BAD!


FOOLISH CHILD. WHY DIDN'T SHE FINISH THEM? SHE HAD THE POWER.
DON'T JUDGE HER FOR HER INNOCENCE.
IT WAS HARD-WON.

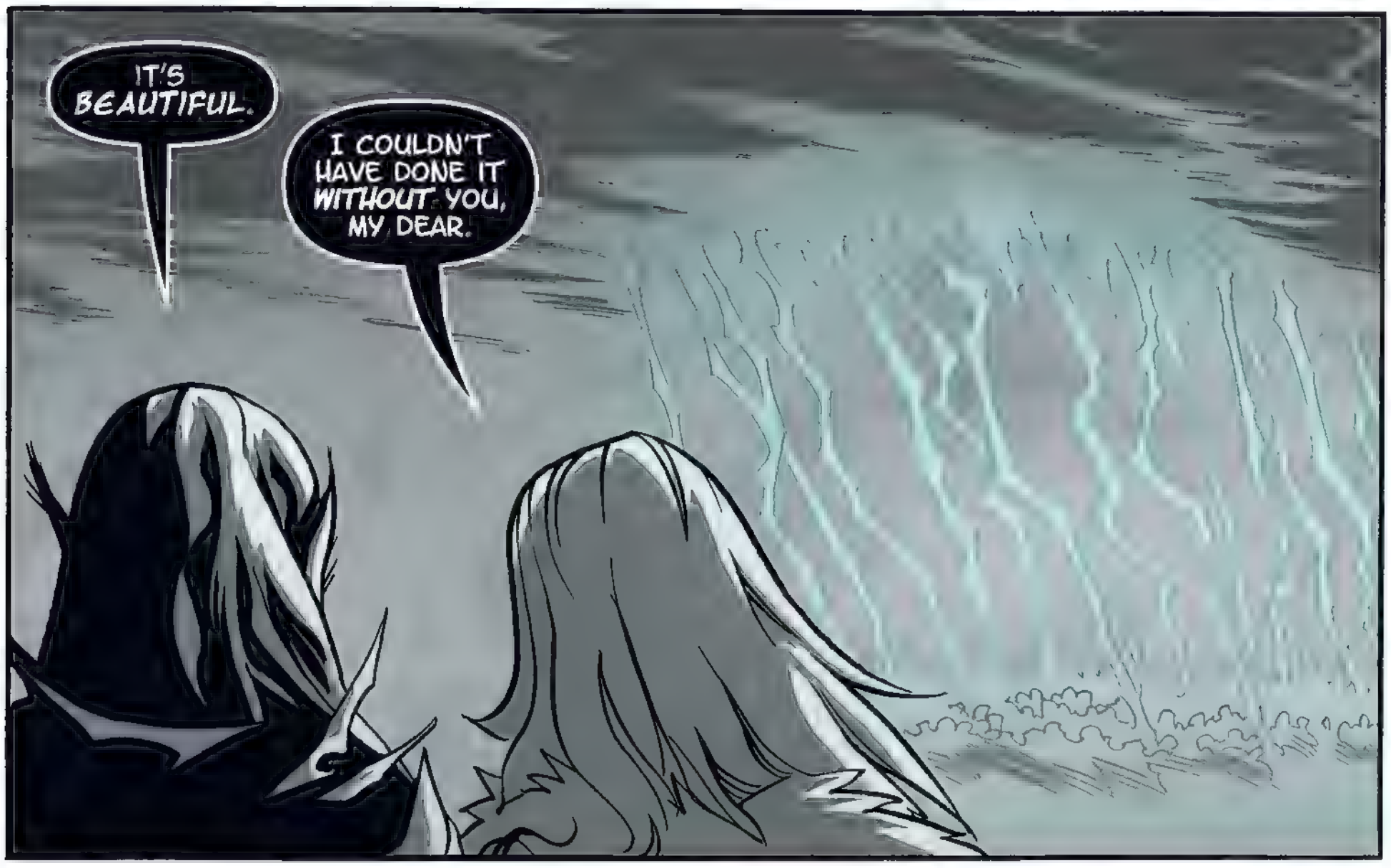
BESIDES, THIS BURDEN WAS ALWAYS MINE.

NO LONGER. NOW IT'S OURS.

TOGETHER THEN.

ALOYSIUS?

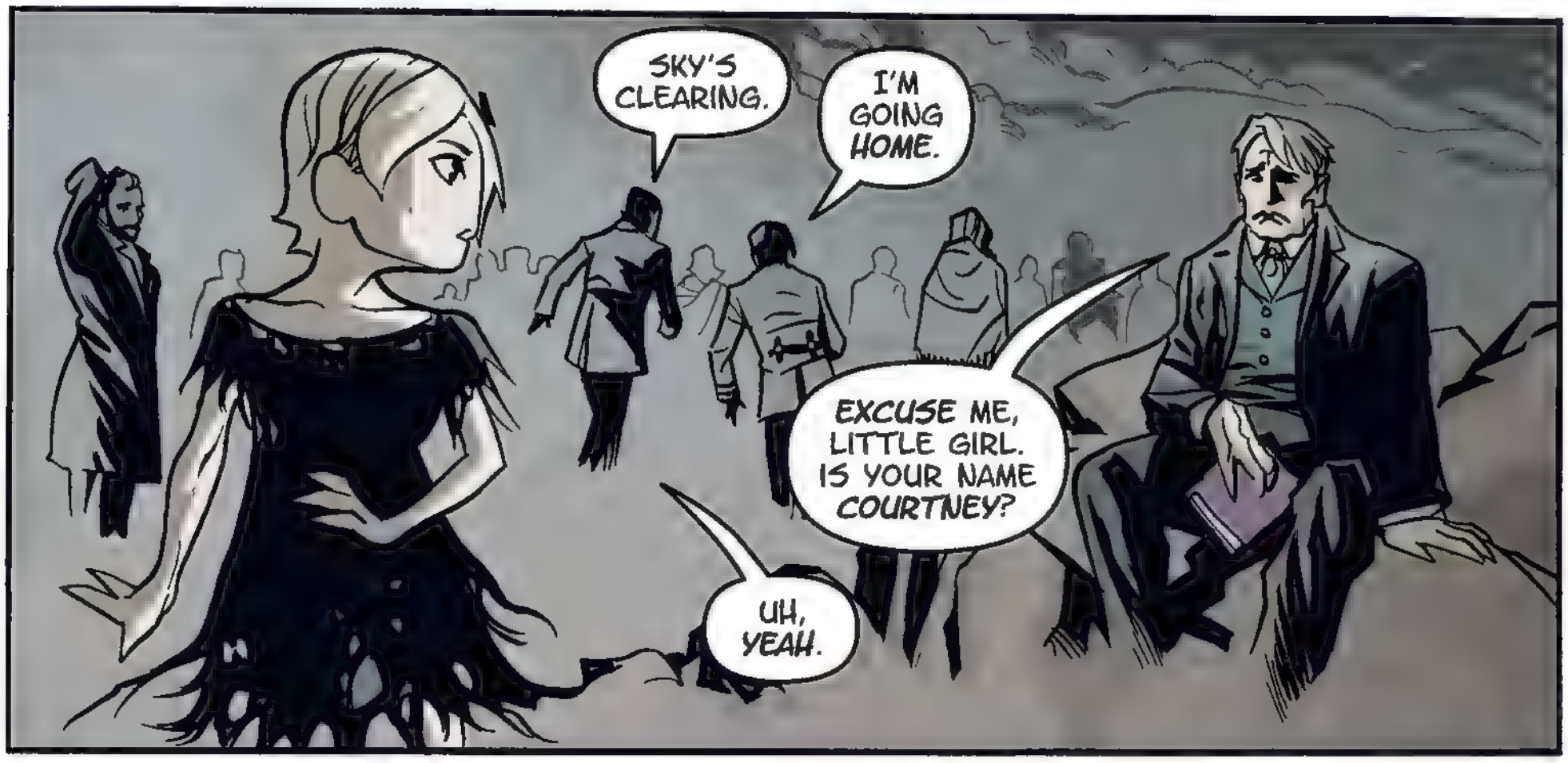
DIE, YOU ABOMINATION!


IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU, MY DEAR.

WHAT THE DEVIL WAS THAT?
BACK OFF IF YOU DON'T WANT A FIREBALL UP YOUR NOSE!

I BEG YOUR PARDON. WHAT ON EARTH DOES THAT MEAN?

UH...
WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
I REMEMBER SOMETHING ABOUT A STORM. SHOULDN'T WE BE INDOORS?


SKY'S CLEARING.
I'M GOING HOME.
EXCUSE ME, LITTLE GIRL. IS YOUR NAME COURTNEY?
UH, YEAH.

THEN THIS MUST BE YOURS. I FOUND IT IN THE RUBBLE THERE.
ER... THANK YOU, SIR.
COURTNEY'S DIARY
DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!

SUCH A SWEET CHILD. I HAD A LITTLE BOY, ONCE.

HE'S GONE NOW. THE HURT NEVER REALLY GOES AWAY, YOU KNOW.
I KNOW.

WHEN COURTNEY AWOKE THE NEXT MORNING, IT TOOK HER A MOMENT TO REMEMBER SHE WAS THE ONLY WITCH IN HILLSBOROUGH.

WHICH WAS THE FIRST IN A DAY FULL OF SURPRISES...

LIVING ROOM

NO, THE EXERCISE MACHINES *FIRST*. I CAN'T GO MORE THAN A *DAY* WITHOUT MY *TREADMILL*.

WHAT'S GOING *ON*?

BEDROOM

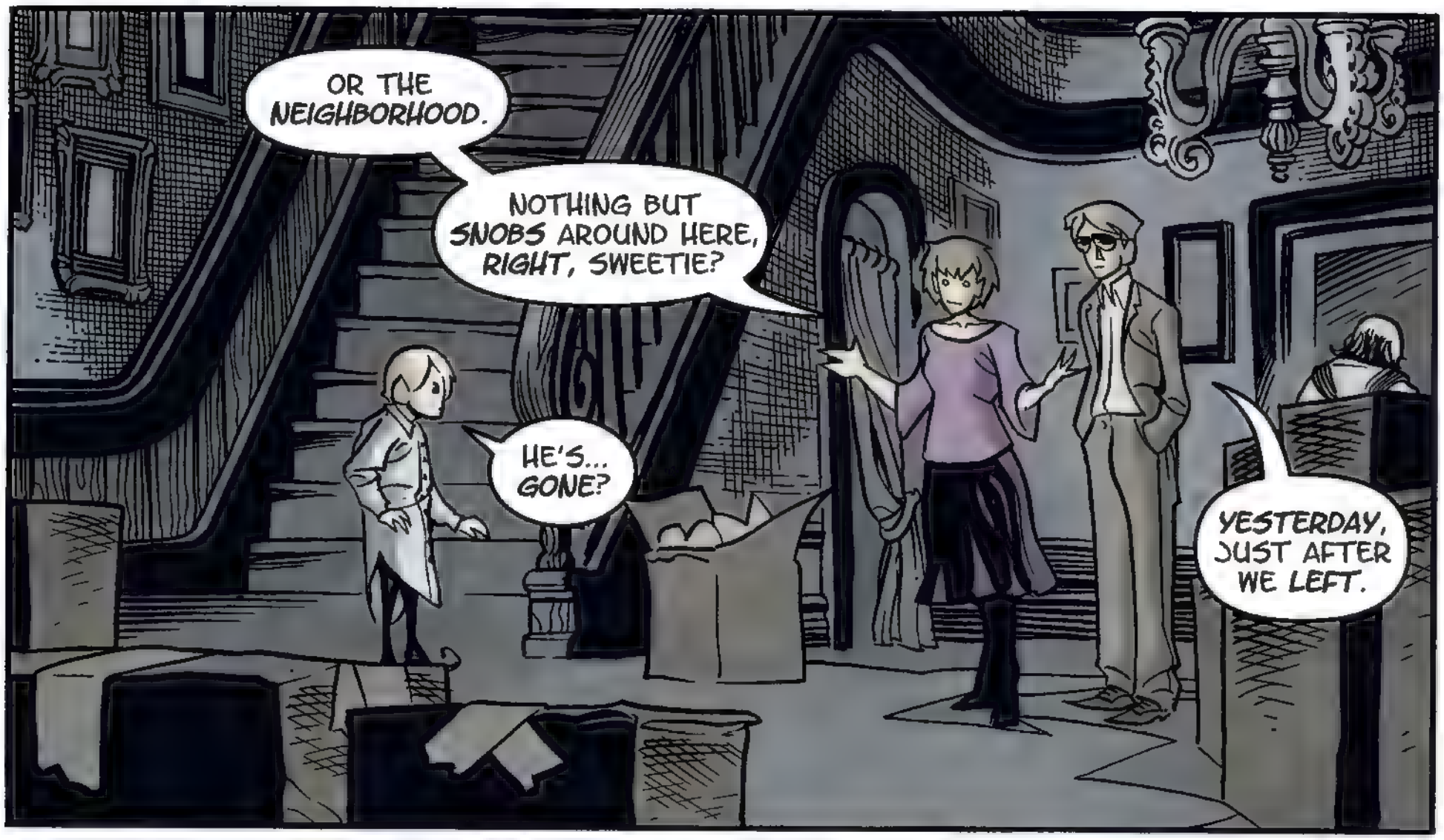
BEDROOM

OH, GOOD *MORNING*, DEAR. WE'RE *MOVING*!

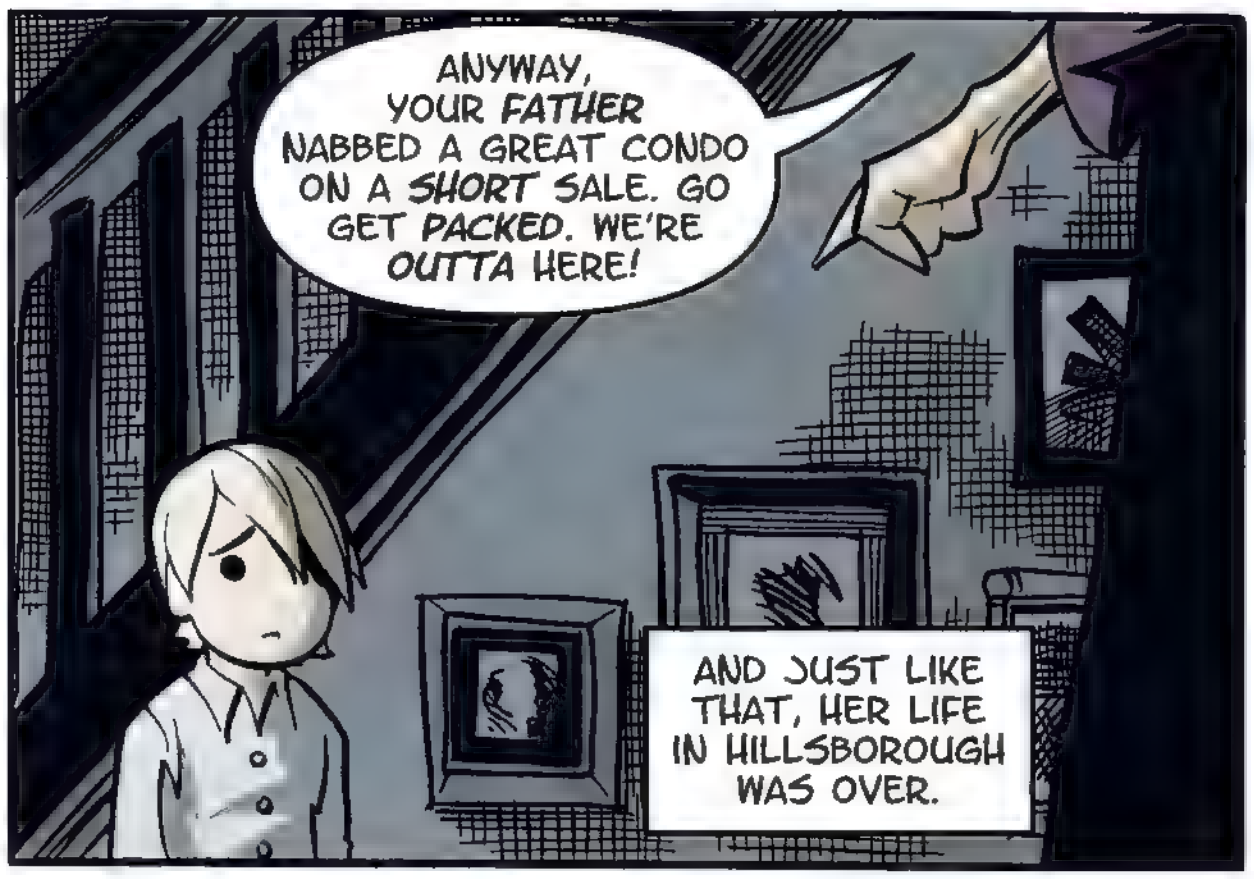
UNCLE *ALOYSIUS*, BLESS HIS HEART, LEFT US *EVERYTHING*.

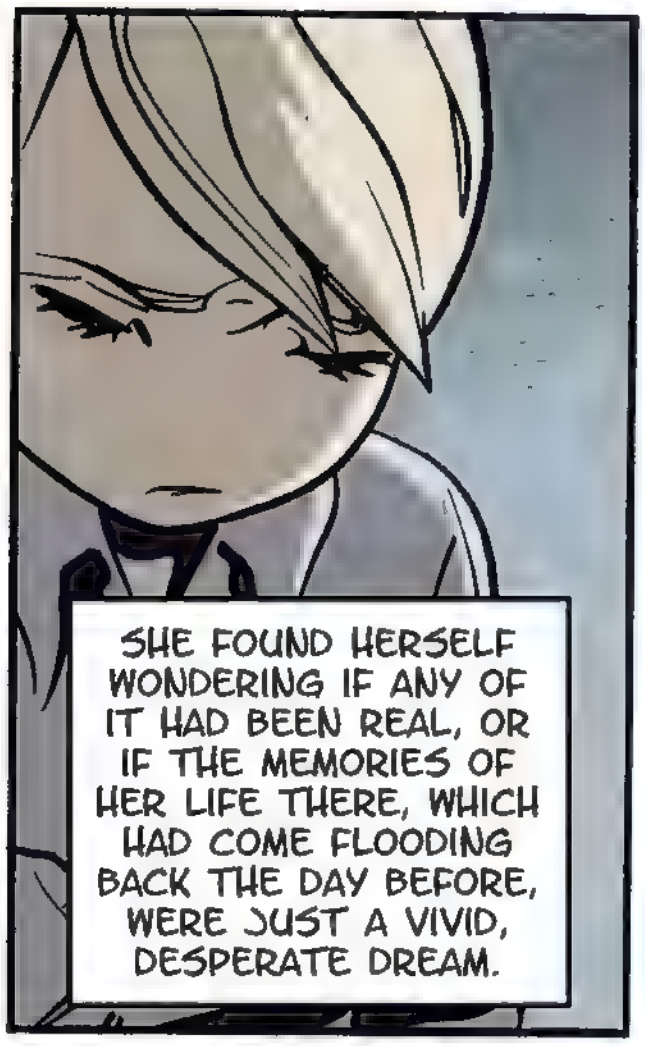
EXCEPT THE *HOUSE*. THAT'S GOING TO SOMEONE NAMED *CRISP*. A FORMER *MAID* OR SOMETHING.

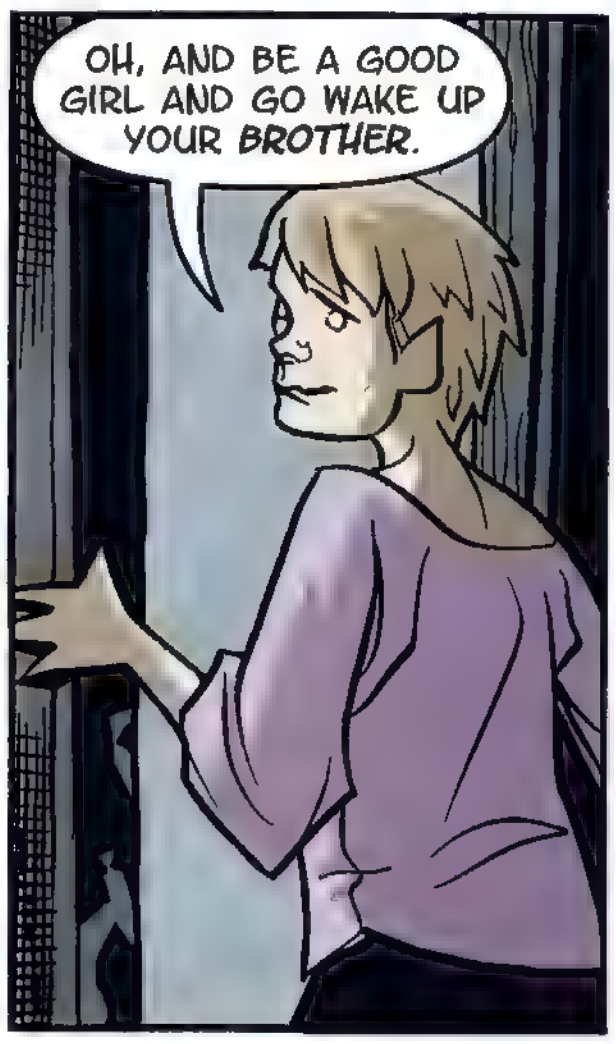
WE NEVER LIKED IT *ANYWAY*, *DID* WE?


OR THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
NOTHING BUT SNOBS AROUND HERE, RIGHT, SWEETIE?
HE'S... GONE?
YESTERDAY, JUST AFTER WE LEFT.

OH, HONEY, I'M SORRY I DIDN'T TELL YOU.
WE WERE BUSY ALL AFTERNOON WITH THE LAWYER.


ANYWAY, YOUR FATHER NABBED A GREAT CONDO ON A SHORT SALE. GO GET PACKED. WE'RE OUTTA HERE!
AND JUST LIKE THAT, HER LIFE IN HILLSBOROUGH WAS OVER.


SHE FOUND HERSELF WONDERING IF ANY OF IT HAD BEEN REAL, OR IF THE MEMORIES OF HER LIFE THERE, WHICH HAD COME FLOODING BACK THE DAY BEFORE, WERE JUST A VIVID, DESPERATE DREAM.


OH, AND BE A GOOD GIRL AND GO WAKE UP YOUR BROTHER.

...BROTHER?

UNTIL SHE TURNED AROUND AND SAW...
WHAT, DID YOU FORGET I EXIST?
...ME.

COME THIS WAY, SUSAN. SHE'S BEEN ASKING FOR YOU.

BUT THAT'S LIFE, ISN'T IT?
ALICIA?

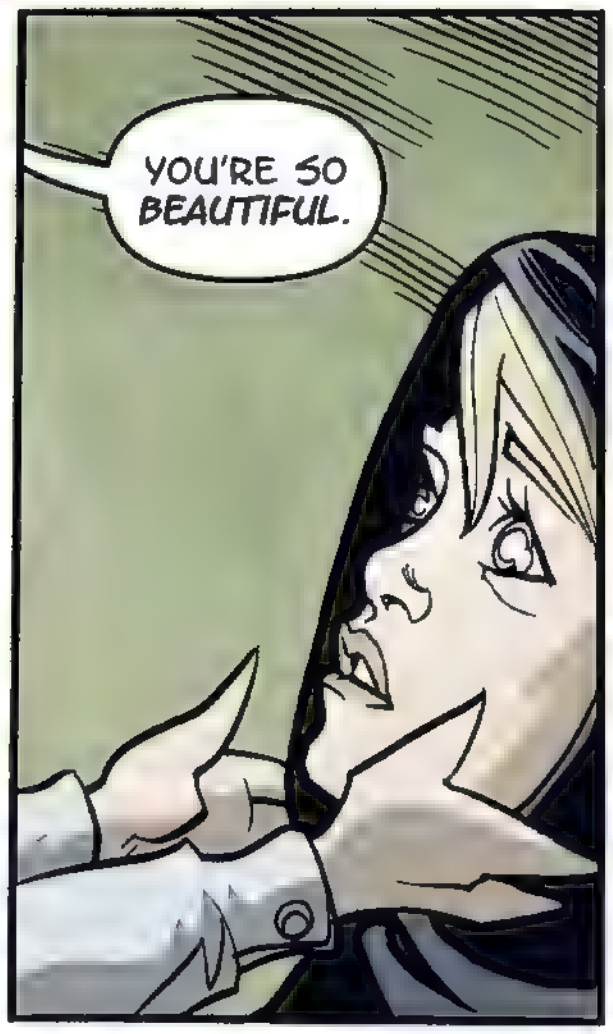
YOU WAKE UP ONE DAY...
THEY'RE GONE.

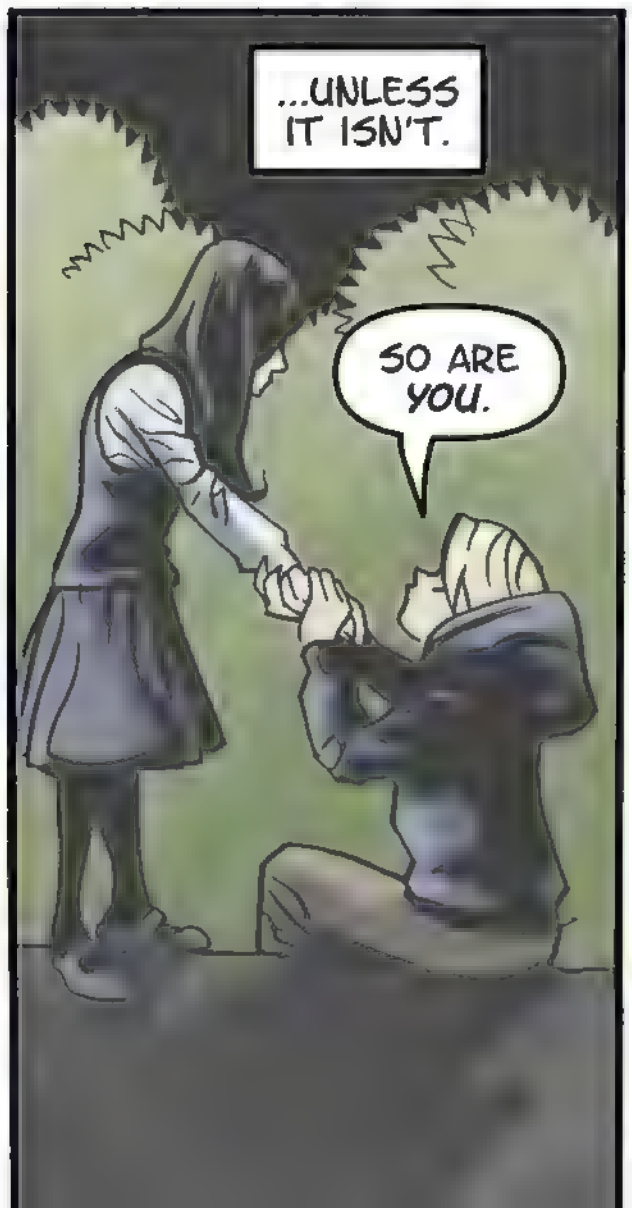
...AND WHOEVER YOU REMEMBER BEING THE NIGHT BEFORE...
THEY'RE GONE.

...IS WHO YOU ARE...
GARETH? I BROUGHT YOU SOME LUNCH.

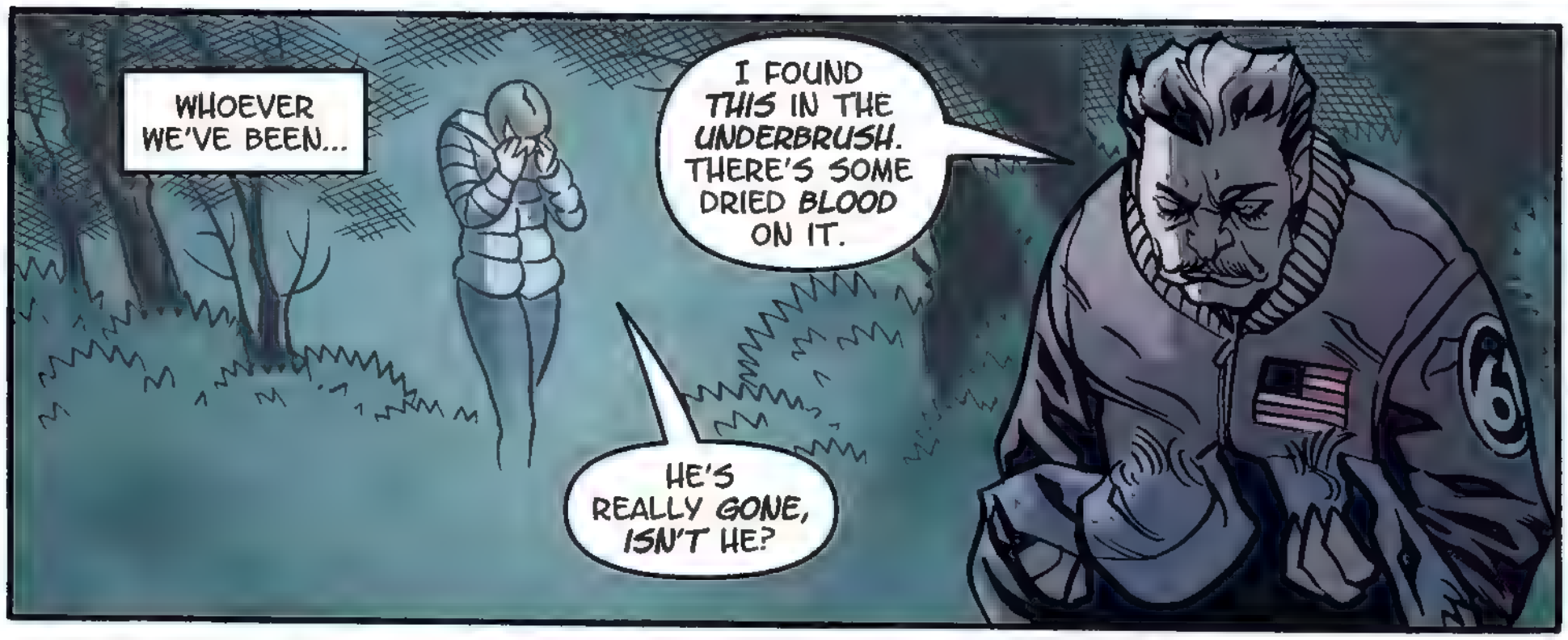
THANKS. JUST LEAVE IT. YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK AT ME.
GARETH? YOUR FACE...
I KNOW. DON'T-

I'D FORGOTTEN.


YOU'RE SO BEAUTIFUL.


...UNLESS IT ISN'T.
SO ARE YOU.

JEB, PEOPLE ARE STARING.
YOU WANT HIM TO RUN AWAY AGAIN?
WHATEVER WE REMEMBER...


WHOEVER WE'VE BEEN...
I FOUND THIS IN THE UNDERBRUSH. THERE'S SOME DRIED BLOOD ON IT.
HE'S REALLY GONE, ISN'T HE?

...IS NOTHING BUT WORDS AND PICTURES IN OUR HEAD.
WELL, MISS CRISP, HERE IT IS.
I ASSUME YOU'LL WANT TO PUT IT ON THE MARKET RIGHT AWAY.
NO.

IT'S UP TO US TO DECIDE WHICH ONES TELL OUR STORY.
I THINK I'LL GET TO KNOW THE PLACE. I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS THAT NEED ANSWERING.

I STILL DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU GOT THE NAME "WILBERFORCE".

MUST HAVE BEEN THE DEMEROL.

OW! NOT SO TIGHT, SIS!

I SUPPOSE I FELT THE SAME AS COURTNEY. TWO DIFFERENT LIFE-TIMES SWAM AROUND EACH OTHER IN MY HEAD LIKE EELS, UNTIL I COULDN'T SAY WHAT WAS REAL.

SORRY.

YOU'RE GONNA MISS THAT PLACE, AREN'T YOU?

BUT I KNEW ONE THING FOR CERTAIN.

JUST ONE PART OF IT.

I THINK HE'S GONNA MISS YOU, TOO.

WHAT *HAPPENS*, DO YOU THINK?

YOU MEAN AFTER PEOPLE *DIE*?

FOR *MOST* PEOPLE? I DON'T *KNOW*.

...IT FELT GOOD JUST KNOWING SHE WAS THERE...

BUT FOR *ALOYSIUS*?

I THINK I CAN *GUESS*.

...KNOWING I WASN'T ALONE.

AND THAT IS THE TALE OF COURTNEY CRUMRIN, THE WICKEDEST WITCH OF HILLSBOROUGH.

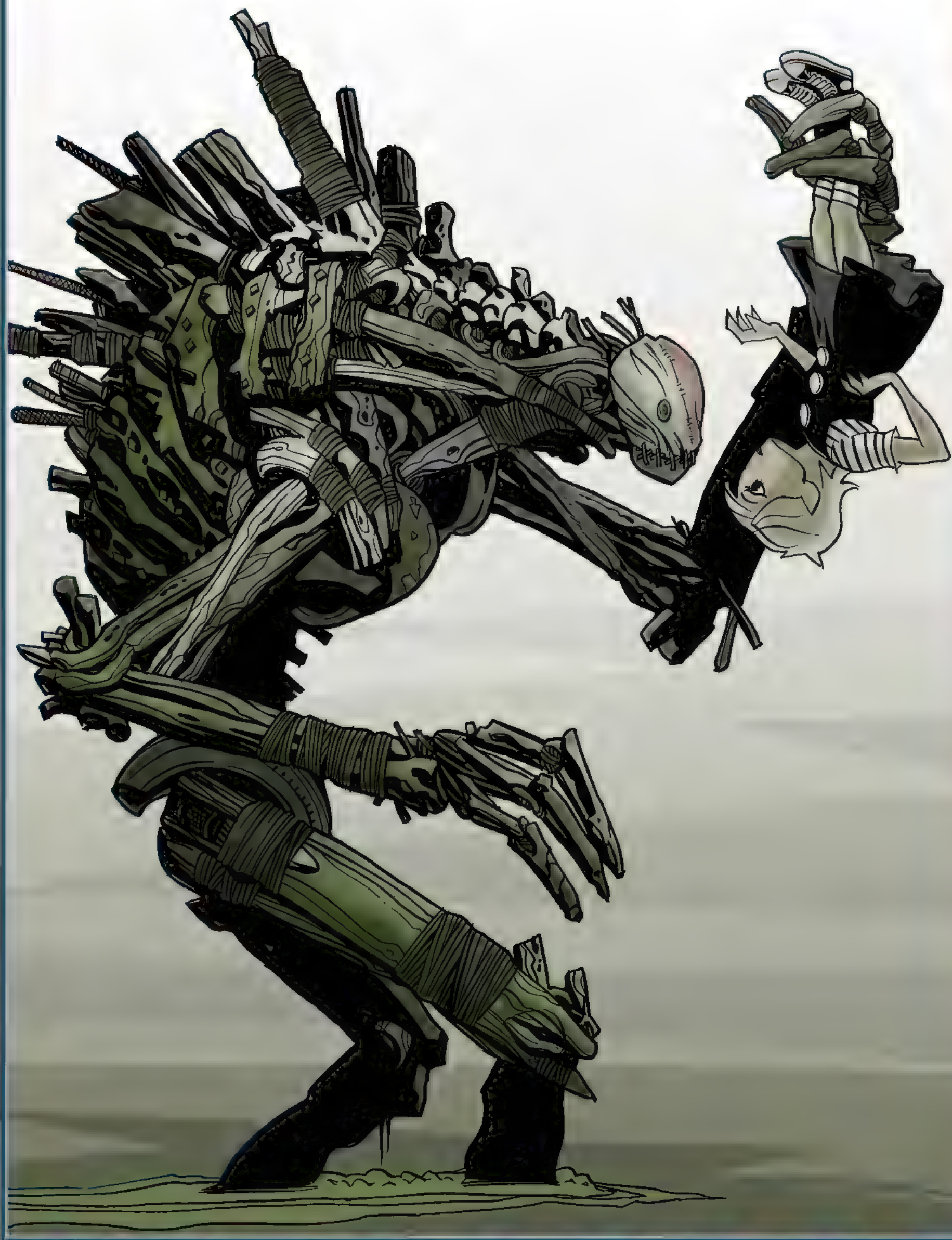
Courtney Crumrin

Volume Six

The Final Spell

Bonus Material & Cover Gallery

Cover artwork for *Courtney Crumrin* issue #6.



Cover artwork for *Courtney Crumrin* issue #7.

Cover artwork for *Courtney Crumrin* issue #8.

Cover artwork for *Courtney Crumrin* issue #9.

Cover artwork for *Courtney Crumrin* issue #10.

Courtney Crumrin

By Ted Naifeh

Bonus Material

2002 Oni Press Color Special

BEFORE MOVING IN, THE CRUMRINS WERE ALMOST NEVER INVITED TO UNCLE ALOYSIUS' HOME. BUT THEY COULDN'T REALLY AFFORD TO BE HUFFY ABOUT IT, GIVEN THE OLD PROFESSOR'S REPUTED WEALTH.

WE'RE *HERE*, SWEETHEART!

MRS. CRUMRIN HAD CANCELED A TRIP TO COURTNEY'S FAVORITE THEME PARK, JUST TO FIT INTO THE OLD MAN'S SCHEDULE.

DOESN'T THAT LOOK MORE FUN THAN *WEENCI* -WORLD?

BRRR...

HAVING LIVED HER WHOLE LIFE IN APARTMENTS, UNCLE ALOYSIUS'S HOME SEEMED BY COMPARISON STAGGERINGLY LARGE AND FORBIDDING.

SHE'S *REALLY* A GOOD GIRL. WE CAN JUST PUT HER IN FRONT OF THE *TUBE* AND *FORGET* ABOUT HER.

BIG.

CHARMING.

UNFORTUNATELY, I DON'T *HAVE* A "*TUBE*."

YOU *DON'T*? HUH!

OKAY... ISN'T THERE *ANYTHING* AROUND HERE TO KEEP HER *OCCUPIED*?

IT WAS MORE OR LESS AT THIS POINT IN HER LIFE THAT COURTNEY REALIZED HER MOTHER WASN'T ABOVE THE OCCASIONAL CONVENIENT FIB. THIS HOUSE WASN'T AT ALL LIKE THE WEENCI MYSTERY-RIDE.

...GRUMBLE...

BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING ODD ABOUT THE PLACE.

SOMETHING NOT QUITE...

NATURAL.

AAAAH!

BIG BUGS!

CLEARLY SOMETHING TERRIBLY SUSPICIOUS WAS GOING ON, AND COURTNEY INTENDED TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF IT.

SHE'D NEVER SEEN SO MUCH VEGETATION LEFT TO GROW WILD. THE GARDEN WAS A LUSH, FECUND PLAYGROUND, EVERY BIT AS PROMISING AS ANY AMUSEMENT PARK.

THE DAY MIGHT NOT BE A TOTAL WASH-OUT AFTER ALL.

TINKERBELL?

WAAK!

SUDDENLY, COURTNEY REMEMBERED THAT SHE WAS IN UNFAMILIAR TERRITORY.

THE STRANGE LOOKING CHILDREN REGARDED HER WITH IMPLIED MENACE.

TAKING THE HINT, SHE SLOWLY BACKED AWAY.

OKAY, GOING.

THIS IS ME, GOING.

BYE-BYE- YOW!!!

HEY!

MUH!

THE SITUATION QUICKLY DEGENERATED INTO A GAME WITH WHICH COURTNEY WAS ALL TOO FAMILIAR.

THAT'S MINE!

COME BACK HERE!

YOU POO-HEAD!

OOOOOOH!

UM... HI!

THERE'S A GUY!

AND HE GOTS MY SHOE.

AND HE'S ALL WEIRD AND LITTLE.

COURTNEY OBVIOUSLY MEANT BUSINESS, AND THE ODD, SILENT CHILDREN GAVE HER NO TROUBLE.

SHE CONTINUED ON, BUT A NAGGING FEELING TOLD HER THAT HER MOTHER MIGHT NOT APPROVE OF HER CURRENT PREDICAMENT.

SHE WAVERED, CONSIDERING HOW MUCH TROUBLE SHE MIGHT BE IN IF SHE RETURNED WITHOUT THE SHOE.

AND THEN...

...THE MATTER WAS SUDDENLY TAKEN OUT OF HER HANDS.

ALL AT ONCE, COURTNEY REALIZED THAT SHE'D BEEN VERY BAD, THOUGH SHE WASN'T SURE HOW.

EHEM!

BUT A SINGLE, ICY GLANCE FROM HER TERRIFYING OLD UNCLE...

...AND COURTNEY COULD TELL SHE WAS IN MORE TROUBLE THAN SHE'D EVER BEEN BEFORE...

...IN HER WHOLE LIFE.

WOULDN'T THE *LIBRARY* MAKE A GREAT *GYMNASIUM?*

ALL THAT LOVELY *WOOD* TRIM...

IF WE *LIVED* HERE, WE'D BE *SET.*

I'D BE ON THE *CITY COUNCIL* INSIDE SIX MONTHS, AND FROM *THERE...*

EHEM.

YOU *MIGHT* WANT TO KEEP BETTER *TRACK* OF....

THIS.

SUCH A *RELAXING* DAY. JUST *LOVELY.*

WHY DON'T WE SPEND THIS *SUMMER* THERE? I COULD SPEAK TO *UNCLE ALOYSIUS.*

WOULD YOU *LIKE* THAT, PUN'KIN?

WAAAAAAAAA!!!

THE END.

Ted Naifeh

Ted Naifeh first appeared in the independent comics scene in 1999 as the artist for *Gloomcookie*, the goth romance comic he co-created with Serena Valentino for SLG Publishing. After a successful run, Ted decided to strike out on his own, writing and drawing *Courtney Crumrin and the Night Things*, a spooky children's fantasy series about a grumpy little girl and her adventures with her Warlock uncle.

Nominated for an Eisner Award for best limited series, Courtney Crumrin's success paved the way for *Polly and the Pirates*, another children's book, this time about a prim and proper girl kidnapped by pirates convinced she was the daughter of their long-lost queen.

Over the next few years, Ted wrote four volumes of *Courtney Crumrin*, plus a spin off book about her uncle. He also co-created *How Loathsome* with Tristan Crane, and illustrated two volumes of the videogame tie-in comic *Death Junior* with screenwriter Gary Whitta. More recently, he illustrated *The Good Neighbors*, a three volume graphic novel series written by *New York Times* best-selling author Holly Black, published by Scholastic.

In 2011, Ted wrote the sequel to *Polly and the Pirates*, and illustrated several *Batman* short stories for DC Comics. In 2012, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of *Courtney Crumrin*, he wrote and illustrated the final two volumes of the series.

Ted lives in San Francisco, because he likes dreary weather.

Courtney Crumrin

By Ted Naifeh

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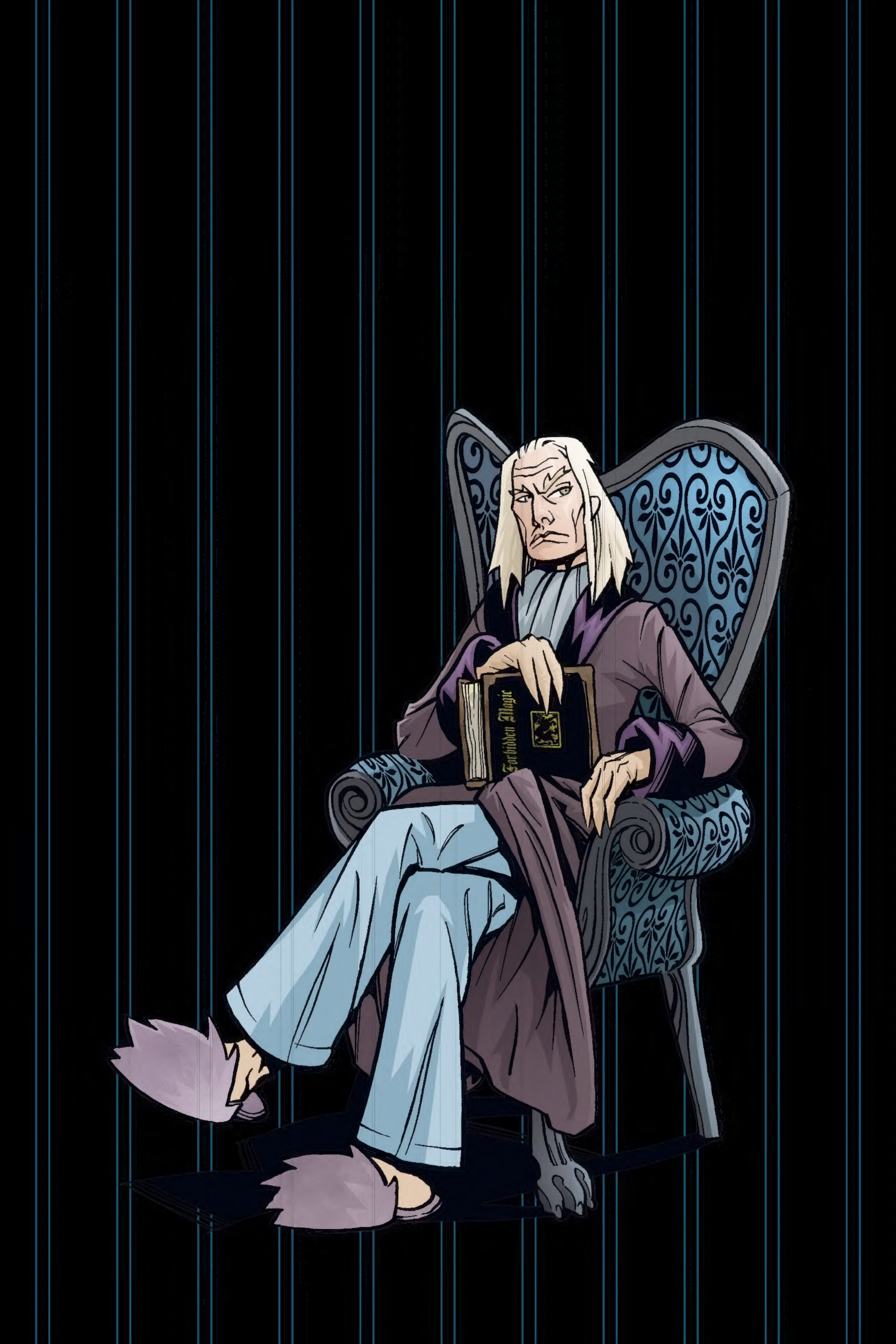
Forbidden Magic

"Courtney Crumrin is the grimmest, bravest, most sarcastic girl in all of comics. I adore her."

–*Holly Black,* The New York Times *best selling author of* The Spiderwick Chronicles *and* Doll Bones

Courtney Crumrin

Volume Six

The Final Spell

On the run from the Coven with her former teacher Calpurnia, Courtney Crumrin is quickly learning just how sinister the witches and warlocks of Hillsborough can be–but she never thought she'd see the day when Uncle Aloysius turned on her as well.

Courtney finds it's a lot harder to fight a battle when the only family you care about is against you, and her only salvation may lie in the Twilight Kingdom–and away from the mortal world. But Aloysius won't give up his niece so easily–even if he has to fight the night creatures to do it.

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